

NO LONGER PROPERTY OF
FALVEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
Villanova, Pennsylvania
FALVEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY



FIRE AND SLEET AND
CANDLELIGHT

edited by August Derleth

FIRE AND SLEET AND CANDLELIGHT

EDITED BY
AUGUST DERLETH



ARKHAM HOUSE: Publishers

Sauk City, Wisconsin

1961

Copyright 1961, by August Derleth

* * *

Acknowledgements

Lament for Better or Worse, by Gene Baro. Copyright 1959, by Gene Baro. From *Northwind and Other Poems*. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

A Lincolnshire Tale, by John Betjeman. Copyright 1958, by John Betjeman. From *John Betjeman's Collected Poems*, by permission of John Murray, Ltd., and Houghton-Mifflin Company.

The Wind Shrieked Loud, Murder House, Daniel Webster's Horses, by Elizabeth Coatsworth. Copyright 1949, by Coward-McCann, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Elizabeth Coatsworth and Coward-McCann, Inc.

Nightmare Number Four, by Robert Bloch. Copyright 1959, by Mary Kornbluth, for *Science Fiction Showcase*.

Elsie's House, by Stanley McNail. Copyright 1958, by Stanley McNail for *Footsteps in the Attic*. *Lottie Mae, The Secrets of Cisterns, The House on Maple Hill*, by Stanley McNail. Copyright 1960, by Stanley McNail for *Black Hawk Country*.

Jim Desterland, by Hyam Plutzik. Copyright 1959, by Hyam Plutzik, for *Apples from Shinar*. By permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Undertone, The Forest, by Dorothy Quick. Copyright 1953, by Dorothy Quick for *Interludes*. By permission of Dorothy Quick and Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.

Ghosts, by Alastair Reed. Copyright 1958 by Alastair Reid, for *Oddments, Inklings, Omens, Moments*. By permission of Little, Brown and Company and Atlantic Monthly Press.

Professor Nocturnal, Where Roots Tangle, The Scissors Grinder, by Raymond Roseliep. Copyright 1961, by The Newman Press, for *The Linen Bands*. By permission of Fr. Raymond Roseliep and The Newman Press.

Perennial Mourner, Spectre, by Sydney King Russell. Copyright 1959, by Sydney King Russell for *Clock and Bottle*. *Six Silver Handles*, by Sydney King Russell. Copyright 1960, by Sydney King Russell. By permission of Sydney King Russell and House of Falmouth, Inc.

Deeply Gone, by Jon Silkin. From *The Peacable Kingdom*, by permission of Jon Silkin and Chatto & Windus, Ltd.

The Lover's Ghost, by Louis Simpson. Copyright 1959, by Louis Simpson, for *A Dream of Governors*. By permission of *The New Yorker* and Wesleyan University Press.

Wilderness Road, Herbs and Simples, by Martha Keller. Copyright 1946, by Martha Keller Rowland for *Brady's Bend and Other Ballads*. By permission of Martha Keller Rowland and Rutgers University Press.

Oldest Cemetery, by Mark Van Doren. Copyright 1958, by Mark Van Doren.
From *Morning Worship and Other Poems*, by permission of Harcourt, Brace
& World, Inc.

*Flight, Ghostly Reaper, Sleeping Village, Gentleman in Oils, A Wreath for One
Lost, We, the Few Who Believe, Toward Avernus, Heimdall, The Well-
finder*, by Harold Vinal. Copyright 1948, by Harold Vinal, for *Selected
Poems*. By permission of Harold Vinal and Falmouth Publishing House.

The Ghost, by James Wright. Copyright 1959, by James Wright, for *Saint Judas*.
By permission of Wesleyan University Press.

Atavism, by Elinor Wylie. Copyright 1921, 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
Reprinted from *Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie* by permission of Alfred A.
Knopf, Inc.

* * *

Keep Darkness, The Yellow Cat, by Leslie Nelson Jennings, from *Mill Talk and
Other Poems* (Fine Editions Press).

Invisible Painter, Reversions, by Alfred Dorn, from *Wine in Stone. Dark Hotel*,
by Alfred Dorn, from *Flamenco Dancer*.

Ambushed by Angels, by Gustav Davidson, from *The Golden Year* (Fine Edi-
tions Press).

The Watcher, by Stanton A. Coblenz, from *Green Vistas* (Wings Press).

Since We Are Property, Legend of the Hills, by Lilith Lorraine. Copyright 1952
by Lilith Lorraine for *Wine of Wonder*.

Earth-Born, The Sands of Time, by Robert E. Howard. By permission of Otis
Kline Associates, Inc.

Opening Door, Ghosts, by Winifred Adams Burr, from *Design for Courage*. By
permission of Winifred Adams Burr.

* * *

American Bard, for *Mr. Ripley Parodies Mr. Nash—or Vice Versa*, by Julian
Brown.

American Weave, for *Sorceress*, by Gertrude Claytor / *Grand Finale*, by Sara
King Carleton / *Nightmare*, by Anne Marx / *Inbound*, by Burnham Eaton
/ *The Invaders*, by Jocelyn Macy Sloan.

Antioch Review, for *Epitaph*, by Lewis Turco / *Bedtime Tales, Sunday Edition*,
by Joseph Joel Keith.

Approach, for *This Here Is Hell*, by Sam Bradley.

The Arizona Quarterly, for *Tropes of One Season*, by Charles Edward Eaton.

The Arkansas Gazette, for *Legend of the Hills*, by Lilith Lorraine.

Arts in Society, for *GI*, by Raymond Roseliep.

The Atlantic Monthly, for *The Word of Willow*, by Leah Bodine Drake.

Burnt Star, for *Gather These Bones*, by Lewis Turco.

The Catacomb, for *Wolf and Tiger Dining, A. B.*, by Joseph Joel Keith.

The Chicago Review, for *Alan*, by Raymond Roseliep.

The Chicago Tribune, for *Femme Fatale, Romantic Episode, The Death of Santa
Claus*, by Vincent Starrett.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, for *Old Meg of Kitrann*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
Combustion, for *Fancy Fishing*, by James L. Weil.
The Commonweal, for *Tour. In Rain*, by Raymond Roseliep.
The Country Poet, for *Warning*, by Sydney King Russell.
The Critic, for *Vendor*, by Raymond Roseliep.
The Denver Post Empire Magazine, for *Premonition*, by Edith Ogutsch.
Epos, for *Sonata for Wind and Wood*, by Lewis Turco / *Tropes of One Season*,
 by Charles Edward Eaton.
Fantasy and Science Fiction, for *The Woods Grow Darker*, *The Gods of the Dana*, by Leah Bodine Drake.
The Fiddlehead, for *Legend of Ramapo Mountain*, by Jennie M. Palen / *Stranger Bride*, *And the Pear Trees Shiver*, by Jocelyn Macy Sloan.
Fine Arts Magazine, for *The Seer*, by Lewis Turco.
Flame, for *The Clean Gentleman*, by George Abbe / *The Scythe of Dreams*, by Joseph Payne Brennan / *It May Be Like This*, by Lilith Lorraine.
The Galley Sail Review, for *The Fair Young Wife*, by Helen Adam.
The Greccourt Review, for *250 Willow Lane*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
The Half Moon, for *Dark Hotel*, by Alfred Dorn.
Hawk & Whippoorwill, for *The Panther Possible*, by William D. Barney.
Here and Now, for *Women Telephoning*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
A Houyhnhym's Scrapbook, for *Prenatal Fantasy*, *The Stone*, by Walter H. Kerr.
Inscape, for *Professor Nocturnal*, by Raymond Roseliep.
Kaleidograph, for *So Separate and Strange*, by Felix Stefanile.
The Kansas City Times, for *Musings of an Insomniac*, by Edith Ogutsch.
The Kenyon Review, for *Party Line*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
The Ladies' Home Journal, for *Heart-Summoned*, *The Gone*, *Two Leaves*, by Jesse Stuart / *One of the Sidhe*, by Mary Kennedy.
The Lantern, for *Tapers*, by Frances Angevine Gray.
The Lyric, for *Tropes of One Season*, by Charles Edward Eaton.
Macabre, for *The Wind of Time*, by Joseph Payne Brennan.
Michigan's Voices, for *In Time of Darkness*, by Raymond Roseliep.
The Minnesota Quarterly, for *Lyric of Doubt*, by Donald Wandrei.
Modern Age, for *The Scissors Grinder*, by Raymond Roseliep.
New Athenaeum, for *2000 A.D.*, by Beverly Connelly.
New Haven Info, for *Grandfather's Ghost*, by Joseph Payne Brennan.
The New York Herald-Tribune, for *Tenant*, by Frances Angevine Gray.
The New York Times, for *Nightmare*, by R. H. Grenville / *The Rowers*, by Laura Benét.
Orb, for *A Warning to Skeptics*, by Leah Bodine Drake.
Poetry, for *Where Roots Tangle*, by Raymond Roseliep.
Prairie Schooner, for *Death Is a Little Thing*, by George Abbe.
The Providence Journal, for *Nursery Rhymes for Surrealists*, by Grant Code.
Quicksilver, for *Addict*, by Mabel MacDonald Carver / *Aunt Jane*, by Alden A. Nowlan / *Devil Doll*, by Lisa Grenelle / *In the Beginninging*, by William D. Barney.

San Francisco Review, for *For a Poetry Reading to Which No One Came*, by Larry Rubin.
The San Francisco Star, for *The Witch*, by Stanley McNail.
The Saturday Evening Post, for *Room in Darkness*, by Mary Elizabeth Counselman.
The Saturday Review, for *The Druggist*, by Larry Rubin / *Pause*, by Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni.
Scimitar and Song, for *Country Lane*, by Margaret Stanion Darling.
Snowy Egret, for *Arachnida, Female*, by Aletha Humphreys / *A Little Night Music*, by Felix Stefanile.
The Southwest Review, for *Synchronized*, by Larry Rubin / *Child Wife, Salems of Oppression*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
The Sparrow Magazine, for *Flogged Child*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
Spearhead, for *Since We Are Property*, by Lilith Lorraine.
Spirit, for *Part-Time Tenant*, by Edna Meudt / *Black Are the Stars*, by Raymond Roseliep.
Starlanes, for *Semi-Private*, by Mabel MacDonald Carver / *Roc's Brood*, by Sam Bradley / *No Escape*, by Lilith Lorraine.
The Step Ladder, for *Otherwise*, by Frances Angevine Gray / *Praying Mantis*, by Felix Stefanile.
Talaria, for *The Pool*, by Leah Bodine Drake.
Tellus, for *The Hanged Thing, Trap*, by Walter H. Kerr.
Trails, for *Mr. Lerner*, by Joseph Joel Keith.
Unicorn, for *Ballad of Two Kings*, by Grant Code.
University of Kansas City Review, for *The Stair*, by Gertrude Claytor / *From Nothing Strange*, by Gustav Davidson / *Tropes of One Season*, by Charles Edward Eaton.
Voices, for *Paneled in Pine*, by Marguerite George / *Top Hat and Tales, Soft Sell*, by Lorna Beers / *Tropes of One Season*, by Charles Edward Eaton.
Weird Tales, for *House of Life*, by Dorothy Quick / *Atlantis*, by Stanton A. Coblenz.
Yankee, for *Shadowed*, by Burnham Eaton.

* * *

And to Lin Carter must go special acknowledgement for suggesting
Fire and Sleet and Candlelight, from the *Lyke-Wake*
Dirge as the title for this anthology.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte
 —Every nighte and alle,
 Fire and sleet and candle-lighte,
 And Christe receive thy soule.

Contents

Introduction, by August Derleth	xix
George Abbe	
You Were at the Dead River	3
Death Is a Little Thing	3
The Clean Gentleman	4
Helen Adam	
The Step Mother	5
The Fair Young Wife	7
Ethan Ayer	
An Exceeding Great Army	10
Robert H. Barlow	
Edgar Allan Poe	11
Shub-Ad	11
Warning to Snake-Killers	12
Mythological Episode	13
William D. Barney	
The Panther Possible	13
The Gourd-Heads	14
In the Beginning	16
Gene Baro	
Lament for Better or Worse	17
Lorna Beers	
Top Hat and Tales	18
Soft Sell	19
Laura Benét	
The Rowers	19
Babylon	20
John Betjeman	
A Lincolnshire Tale	21
Robert Bloch	
Nightmare Number Four	24
Samuel M. Bradley	
This Here Is Hell	29
Roc's Brood	30

Joseph Payne Brennan	
One Day of Rain	31
Ghost-Town Saloon: Winter	32
The Humming Stair	32
Recognition of Death	33
The Scythe of Dreams	33
The Chestnut Roasters	34
The Man I Met	35
The Serpent Waits	35
Grandfather's Ghost	36
The Last Pagan Mourns for Dark Rosaleen	36
Ossian	37
The Wind of Time	37
Avery Anameer	38
Nightmare	39
Julian Brown	
Mr. Ripley Parodies Mr. Nash—or Vice Versa	40
Winifred Adams Burr	
Opening Door	41
Ghosts	42
Sara King Carleton	
Grand Finale	43
Lin Carter	
Lunae Custodiens	44
The Dream-Daemon	46
The Sabbat	47
Carcosa	47
Dark Yuggoth	48
Mabel MacDonald Carver	
Semi-Private	48
Addict	49
Gertrude Claytor	
Sorceress	50
The Stair	50
Elizabeth Coatsworth	
Green Woods	52
Empty House	52

The Wind Shrieked Loud	53
Murder House	54
Daniel Webster's Horses	55
Stanton A. Coblentz	
Atlantis	56
The Watcher	57
Grant Code	
The High Place at Marib	58
News of My Friends	60
Highway to Nowhere	61
The Night Refuses a Dreamer	62
Playground of the Pixie	62
Foreboding	64
Ballad of Two Kings	64
Building of Sand	65
Nursery Rhymes for Surrealists	66
Prayer in Blackout	66
Nos Moraturi Te Salutamus	66
Epitaph for a Wooden Soldier	67
Beverly Connelly	
2000 A.D.	68
Testimony	68
Mary Elizabeth Counselman	
Room in Darkness	68
Margaret Stanion Darling	
Country Lane	69
Gustav Davidson	
From Nothing Strange	70
Downgoing	70
Ambushed by Angels	71
August Derleth	
Moon and Fog	72
Place-Ghost	72
Alfred Dorn	
Invisible Painter	73
Dark Hotel	74
Reversions	74

Leah Bodine Drake	
The Woods Grow Darker	75
A Warning to Skeptics	76
The Pool	77
The Word of Willow	78
The Gods of the Dana	79
The Witches	80
Burnham Eaton	
The Unexplored	82
Inbound	82
Shadowed	83
Lost Voice on this Hill	84
Charles Edward Eaton	
Tropes of One Season	85
Norma Farber	
Unicorns at Harvard	89
Parkinson and the Octopus	91
Witching Hour	91
Marguerite George	
Paneled in Pine	94
Brief Biography	94
Here I Lie	95
Ryah Tumarkin Goodman	
They Know	96
Frances Angevine Gray	
Tenant	97
Otherwhere	98
Tapers	98
Lisa Grenelle	
Devil Doll	99
R. H. Grenville	
Nightmare	100
Intuition	101
Ghost	101
Borderline	102
Amy Groesbeck	
The Brothers	102

Robert E. Howard	
The Sands of Time	107
Earth-Born	108
Aletha Humphreys	
Arachnida, Female	109
Party Bid	109
Leslie Nelson Jennings	
Keep Darkness	110
The Yellow Cat	110
Geoffrey Johnson	
A Winter Legend	112
Joseph Joel Keith	
250 Willow Lane	113
Bedtime Tales	114
Mr. Lerner	115
Child Wife	115
Woman Telephoning	116
Flogged Child	116
Sunday Edition	117
Wolf and Tiger Dining, A. B.	118
Salems of Oppression	118
Old Meg of Kitrann	119
Party Line	119
Nightmare in Morganza	120
Martha Keller	
Wilderness Road	123
Herbs and Simples	123
Mary Kennedy	
One of the Sidhe	124
Walter H. Kerr	
Prenatal Fantasy	126
The Hanged Thing	127
Vampire	127
Trap	128
The Stone	128
Herman Stowell King	
Evocation	129

Vera Bishop Konrick	
Erda	130
Frank Belknap Long	
Adjuration	130
The New Adam	131
It Is Not Only the Dead	132
Lilith Lorraine	
Since We Are Property	133
No Escape	133
Case History	134
It May Be Like This	134
Legend of the Hills	135
Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni	
Pause	136
Anne Marx	
Nightmare	136
Stanley McNail	
Elsie's House	137
Lottie Mae	138
The Secrets of Cisterns	138
The House on Maple Hill	139
The Witch	140
Edna Meudt	
Part-Time Tenant	141
H. S. Neill	
Second Sight	142
Alden A. Nowlan	
Aunt Jane	143
Edith Ogutsch	
Musings of an Insomniac	143
Premonition	144
Jennie M. Palen	
Legend of Ramapo Mountain	144
Conrad Pendleton	
Dark House in Autumn	148
Hyam Plutzik	
Jim Desterland	149

Tom Poots	
Black Spirit	150
Dorothy Quick	
The Monster	151
House of Life	151
The Forest	153
Undertone	153
Katherine Reeves	
Enigma	154
Alastair Reid	
Ghosts	155
Liboria E. Romano	
All Souls	156
Raymond Roseliep	
Vendor	157
Professor Nocturnal	158
Black Are the Stars	160
Where Roots Tangle	161
In Time of Darkness	161
The Scissors Grinder	162
Alan	163
GI	164
Tour. In Rain	164
Larry Rubin	
Synchronized	165
For a Poetry Reading to Which No One Came	166
The Druggist	167
Sydney King Russell	
Night Peril	167
Warning	168
The Shape of Fear	169
Forecast	170
Six Silver Handles	171
Perennial Mourner	172
Spectre	173
Antonia Y. Schwab	
Danse Macabre	174

Walter Shedlofsky	
Prophecy	175
House of Yesterday	175
Ruth Forbes Sherry	
Waltz	176
Jon Silkin	
Deeply Gone	177
Louis Simpson	
The Lover's Ghost	181
Jocelyn Macy Sloan	
Stranger Bride	182
And the Pear Trees Shiver	182
The Invaders	183
Clark Ashton Smith	
To the Daemon Sublimity	184
The Incubus of Time	184
Metaphor	185
Memorial	185
Amor Aeternalis	186
The Horologe	186
Vincent Starrett	
Femme Fatale	187
Romantic Episode	187
The Death of Santa Claus	188
Felix Stefanile	
A Little Night Music	188
Praying Mantis	189
Vampire Bride	190
That Familiar Stranger	191
So Separate and Strange	192
Jane Stuart	
Hawick's Crossing	193
Jesse Stuart	
Heart-Summoned	195
The Gone	195
Spring Voices	196
Two Leaves	196

Extended Invitation	197
Lucia Trent	
Frail Hands	198
Lewis Turco	
The Seer	199
Gather These Bones	200
i. One Song for Old Bones	200
ii. Sonata for Wind and Wood	201
iii. Theme for a Dust Devil	202
iv. Plainchant among the Maidenhair	203
v. Libretto in White	203
vi. Epitaph in a Minor Key	204
Mark Van Doren	
Oldest Cemetery	205
Harold Vinal	
Flight	206
Ghostly Reaper	207
Sleeping Village	207
Gentleman in Oils	208
A Wreath for One Lost	208
We, the Few Who Believe	209
Toward Avernus	210
Heimdall	210
The Well-Finder	211
Donald Wandrei	
Water Sprite	211
The Woman at the Window	212
The Prehistoric Huntsman	213
The Challenger	214
Forest Shapes	214
Lyric of Doubt	215
Wade Wellman	
On the Staircase	215
A Ballad of Despair	216
James L. Weil	
Fancy Fishing	217

Margaret Widdemer

Companions 218

Ghost to Come 219

Loring Williams

The Skeptic 220

Recompense 222

James Wright

The Ghost 223

Elinor Wylie

Atavism 225

INTRODUCTION

It is now almost fifteen years since publication of *Dark of the Moon: Poems of Fantasy and the Macabre*. In that time macabre verse has embraced more modern techniques and subjects, and conventional ghosts, demons, ghouls, and witches have had to make room also for the spectres of psychiatry. Moreover, poems in the general classification of the macabre seemed to be less easy to find than they were in the preceding decades.

It would seem that in a period of poets' extreme preoccupation with themselves, a powerful direction in poetry of the past two decades, there has been less room for verse which could, even under lax strictures, be called poetry of the macabre, and subjects which were commonplace in poetry in this field only a few decades ago are now rarely come upon.

Though this collection contains almost as many poets and poems as *Dark of the Moon*, I regret that it is not as comprehensive for the period covered—the years since that initial anthology—as the earlier collection was. With but a few minor exceptions, the poems in this book were written within the last twenty years. In that period, too, copyright restrictions and fees have increased—fees to the point of being exorbitant and prohibitive—which have resulted in keeping from these pages poems I would have liked to include, so that *Fire and Sleet and Candlelight* is rather a representative collection than a comprehensive one, intended for the same audience as that for *Dark of the Moon*.

—AUGUST DERLETH

Sauk City, Wisconsin
17 July, 1961

FIRE AND SLEET AND
CANDLELIGHT

GEORGE ABBE

YOU WERE AT THE DEAD RIVER

You were at the dead river,
you were at the going of blood.
Pale brother, strong racer,
take hold with me, for the lost good.

All of us saw the wading,
all of us felt the buckling tree,
and the dust rising, the light fading,
the iron fear at the knee.

You were at the forest sharded,
the buildings violent out of thought;
press back with me the ugly-worded,
the blow struck hot.

You were at the cold vanish,
the dull leaving. O brother dead,
eat with my soul the sorrowed finish
of all we meant.

DEATH IS A LITTLE THING

Death is a little thing:
you can put it in a box;
in the dust of an insect wing
it makes an eager spot.

You can catch it in the gleam
of wetness on a lip.
From a sentence born to death
a word may bend and lean:—
and that is darkness' ship,
and that the grave to be.

You can cage it in the corner
in a wink of sun.
Death is a furled banner
with war begun;

on thrush-sad summer road
in quiet rain,
from under a crushed bird's body
the faintest stain;

the fleck of lily powder
on casket's rim
that falls between lid lowered
and music that has been.

THE CLEAN GENTLEMAN

A gentleman with polished hair
walked quickly through the crowd's despair.
So clean his hands the walls be touched
shone as though hushed
by chancel prayer.

Blast furnace flame he brushed aside
with palm beach suit as advertised;
soot flakes from steel mills turned to dew

on cheeks child-wise,
and pink, and new.

He paused at newstand, leaned alone,
cleaned nails on edge of gilt-edge bond;
smiling to dazzle the garbage rats
where thieves had gone
passed down steep steps,

boarded the coal barge ordered to wait
for a clean gentleman born too late.
I saw his footsteps crossing the black,
gold-terrible-bright,
no wrong, no lack,
as neatly placed as trust-fund trace,
nor ever coming back.

HELEN ADAM

THE STEP MOTHER

My lord's young daughter in the earth finds rest.
They laid her doll upon her shrouded breast.
So the waxen image with its crown of glass
Is the child's companion under churchyard grass.

I had little liking for that silent child,
With her ways so quiet, and her eyes so wild,
And the first wife's beauty in her wistful face
To stir his memories, and mock my place.

She had no playmates, and was much alone.
To secret cruelties I will not own.
It was only, only that I could not bear
His smile of pleasure when he called her fair.

This house is older than the old thorn trees.
Its rooms all echo with the roar of the seas.
At night, if a child cried, nobody would hear.
But what should be stirring for a child to fear?

A month of sea mists, and at last she died.
He knelt down weeping at the new grave side,
My words of comfort stammered into air.
The headstone trembled, and the doll stood there.

My heart beat heavy as its eyes met mine.
Black eyes shining, bitter and malign.
He lifted up his head when he heard me groan,
And it darted silently behind the stone.

I looked in my mirror in the evening late.
A young child dying puts an end to hate.
The flame of the candles sprang an azure blaze,
As the mirror tarnished 'neath the doll's dark gaze.

My deep rose garden in the noon day light,
Was balmy refuge from the dreams of night.
A rose tree shuddering when no wind blew.
The red leaves fluttered as the doll pushed through.

The feet that follow me are light as air.
I turn to look and there is no one there.
The hands stretched out to me are weak and small,
Yet hold me helpless in a magic thrall.

My husband's kisses bring me no more joy,
Our bed so menaced by the sleepless toy.
It parts the curtains when the moon shines clear.
Its pygmy shadow is the night I fear.

It parts the curtains of the nuptial bed.
I never loved her, but she's dead! She's dead!
She lies in darkness, and her woes are done.
The doll from the deep grave walks in the sun.

A month of sea mists, and the end of tears.
Alas! for me how many months, or years?
They laid her doll upon her shrouded breast.
The child lies asleep, but the doll won't rest.

THE FAIR YOUNG WIFE

This is a tale for a night of snow.
It was lived in the north land long ago.
An old man nearing the end of life,
Took to his arms a fair young wife.

A wife to keep his house in the woods.
His house of echoes and solitudes,
'Mid forests gloomy and unexplored,
Hunting ground of the wolves abhorred.

Through miles of forest the wolves ran light.
She heard them running at dead of night.
She heard them running though far away,
And her heart leapt up like a beast of prey.

"Lie still, my lady, lie still and sleep.
The north wind blows, and the snow drifts deep.
My timid love, in our curtained bed,
The cry of the wolves you need not dread.

Hunger when the north wind blows.
Running wolves on the winter snows.
When old age sags in a sleep profound
The cry of the wolves is the only sound."

She dreamt she walked in the forest shade,
Alone, and naked and unafraid.
The bonds of being dissolved and broke.
Her body she dropped like a cast off cloak.

Her savage soul to its kindred sped.
In devouring lust with the wolves she fled.
But woke at dawn in a curtained bed,
By an old grey man in an airless bed.

The snow flakes fell without strength or haste
Till the house stood black in an ashen waste.
An old man's arms, and his house to keep.
Blood on snow in the world of sleep.

She dreamt she walked where the wolf eyes gleam,
And soon she walked, and it was no dream.
She fell on fours from the world of man,
And howled her bliss when the rank beasts ran.

The morning life, and the midnight life.
The sun and moon of the fair young wife.
The moon in the north land rules the sky.
She speaks to herself while its orb rides high.

"I am naked. The night is cold.
The moon at my window big and bold.
On fields near the forest the snow lies white.
Will it show our tracks when we run tonight?

For fifty leagues on the frozen snow
I'll feel through my fur the north wind blow.
Run to drink of a bounding flood
With the mighty pack as it quests for blood.

Strong, free, furious, swift to slay,
But back to my bed by the break of day!
Can I lie down at a husband's will,
When wild love runs, and my heart cries, *Kill?*"

"Wife, are you ready to come to bed?"
Her husband calls from the room overhead.
"The lights are out in the distant town,
And I can't sleep until you lie down."

Softly panting, she climbs the stair.
The moon lights the bed with a livid glare.
"I'll draw the curtains around the bed,
And we'll lie hid from the moon," he said.

Curtains drawn in the deep of the night.
Through smothering velvet no glimmer of light.
He turns to his love lying warm in the dark.
In her eyes, shining near him, he sees a red spark.

A spark as bright as the break of day.
She tosses him down in ravenous play.
To the edge of the forest ring his cries.
"A beast! A beast! on my body lies!"

The wolf pack howls in the waste of snow.
She howls to answer them long and low.
But she will not run with the wolves tonight
Though the full moon shines with a blinding light.

Behind the curtains her jaws drip red.
She has found her prey in her own dark bed:
The man, who nearing the end of life,
Took to his arms a fair young wife.

ETHAN AYER

AN EXCEEDING GREAT ARMY

'The graves by the river must have melted in;
The grass has not been mowed, the hedge is trees
Growing from what they planted, year by year,
Over the land for kith and kind and kin.
Hard by the village where the stones uprear
Willow and urn and verse and mortal coil
Unwind across the marble centuries,
The doomed, the ever-disappearing soil.

What are the fish in the trackside river eating,
Or will it be bone below the springtime flood?
Pray God there never will be springtime meeting
Between the unburied and their flesh and blood—
For if there were, the bone might come to bone
And more than that from underneath the stone.

ROBERT H. BARLOW

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Endless the darkly-printed tombstones rise;
Dim evening sunlight pours about them now,
Golden and pale, on path and grave and bough,
And furtively they stare with listless eyes,
Remembering ages lost beneath the years,

All silent now, with strife and love and tears,
Like scattered leaves through which the autumn sighs.
Lesser than leaves a century can grow
As tale and memory blend before the gaze;
No longer lost, these half-forgotten days . . .

Perhaps the shadows stir, perhaps they show
Outcast by life and death, the lonely form,
Exiled, of Poe, the man of night and storm.

SHUB-AD

Even as I wandered the tropic jungle of fever
There were men digging beside Abargi's grave.
Even as I breathed the strange blossom's heart,
Spades flashed and turned.
They warmed my cooling cheek with roses
As I lay on the bier,
They circled my throat with necklaces,
And gave me the bull-head harp

Whose strings had lulled many lovers.
Then all the court lay down and tasted death
In a poison the priests gave them,
And the city was frightened by the prophecy of floods,
For I was the last of many great queens.

An obliterating tide walked over my tomb,
And then I lay still five thousand years—
I thought to wake
Only to see decaying suns hurled down
Like ruined fruit from the boughs of time;
To hear only the knelless tide
Break black upon an altered shore—
But a fumbling hand
Opened the starlight on my fragment of a skull,
And all my looted gems lie clean and ticketed now
In a glass prison.

They have re-strung the beads,
But the speech of the harp is lost.

WARNING TO SNAKE-KILLERS

Queerly walking by a slow and pagan clock
Between the pyramid and church
The god was surprised and killed on the stair of his
ruined shrine.
The Indian crushed the poison pod skull, he gathered
the flowers of the movable skin with a ten-cent knife
and threw away thirty tooth-colored bracelets,
But the stamen tongue wrote a symbol in red beads.

He dreamed that night that Tlaloc, in his heaven of the east
Peopled by those dead of dropsy, and all the colored
 shadows that have looked into rivers,
Turned an eye within his serpent mask
To the messenger of the fourth rain-jar
And ordered mildew spread on all the village corn.

MYTHOLOGICAL EPISODE

O that frog or flower that stealthily
Snipped from the bone Black Tezcatlipoca's foot!
Trapped with his hands full of magic, what could he do
But wither a projected sun,
Drop two or three eternities into his purse unwrought,
And leave us to make sacrifices forever?

WILLIAM D. BARNEY

THE PANTHER POSSIBLE

The old man's words (Something has skittered the cattle
 or else it's to rain hard—storm—tonight)
That, and the tale of someone coming upon
 a Mexican lion that didn't take fright
but looked up from the calf it ate
 and made a horrible rosin-rub
 of sound in its throat, laid its ears flat,
 and walked off stiffly in the scrub.

And the man who got off his tractor to see what that was
of heavy shape and sound in the prickly pear—
who found huge prints and suffered the white fangs
of a hidden explodable stare—
who hurried back to mount
the tractor, found it wouldn't start,
and had to walk five miles in dark
with padding steps timed to his heart—

Was it a wonder the boy heard the panther scream
in the chaparral (how do you tell for certain?)
a wonder his nose began to itch and his right eye water
(it always did when he was scared)? What's the hurt in
achieving a fear of panthers, pure
or imaginary? Wasn't his nose
made itchable? What's a dry eye worth
compared with one that, stricken, glows?

THE GOURD-HEADS

Well, then, gourds. You can call them gourds.
It isn't what I name them when
she has that urge come over. I
have heard her chuckle in her breast:
"Lutie!" (that's as she'll say) "Lutie,
go see what the gourd-heads is thinking."
She does it just to see me quiver.
I do quiver, not all over, but
she has perception. And a tongue
half-rasp, half-goad. She full well knows
it's for the devil to put souls
in gourds, to give them talk and thought.

Wicked enough to paint black faces
and set them leering at the highway
where plushy tourists with no better place
to turn loose money look and buy.
But talk like this, to put palaver
in those dried-up heads, that's the devil's
particular doing. Why does she, then?
For love of gourds, for girlish whims
with vegetable dolls? I know.
Her purpose is to bring the quivers
to an old dowdy woman feared of death
and rocker-bound almost. "Go see
what the gourd-heads is thinking!" Foot,
she knows it makes me.

Suppose, though,

I come back once and tell her dry
and happen-like: They said tell you:
How long, how long, O Lord, how long?
They said: *We think dry thoughts all day:*
shall we thirst throughout the night? They said:
A hollow people and an arid heart!
They said—(look at them grinning there,
melonish skulls and skinny necks,
dehydrated brains ready to rattle)
they said, *Why have you emptied us*
and painted us with harlot smiles
like advertisements?

What they say,

they really say, she never hears.
I never tell her, knowing her
to be so thick. And yet. And yet,
to hear her mocking over and above
their grisly clacking (she doesn't,

no, she doesn't even halfway hear) —
 the horror of it and the humor
 contest within me till the quivers
 rend me like straw in rising wind.

IN THE BEGINNINGING

In the beginninging nobody paid attention
 to the words. True, almost anyonebody
 could see that something was circumstancing
 to the vigation. Peculinary processes
 kept extrapolating in the stranges places;
 the studiest plants turn upt with missing
 in their compotion, while still others put
 out all manner of excrescenes and protubers.

"This comes of the gametes," they said:
 "Whowhich have been gathering garblic."

We noticed it in the popularlace, too.
 In the ampipathetic eveningings
 they would geigrate before the tubalaoobs
 and singsong to themselves a la chrymose:
 "Beatific Somnambular! Thantatosis Legume!"
 That was because no channel which matter
 you turned into, things forgot:
 eyestalks, for example, like rhubarbarism,
 or maybe your tongue refleshed to coil
 lepidopterously. Somebody forgot to shield
 everything (a natural amenstake)
 (babies were tranquillised in the mushroom)
 chromosomebody, I say, forgot
 and it was not more than expectant

all in the gammagumbo
the merely immortal sustained
several thousand wrenchings.

GENE BARO

LAMENT FOR BETTER OR WORSE

The hour told by the owl and the moon
through the chinks of the ruined clock tower
in the creaky wood may find the witch of the world
confused, the wizard world-weary. There is a time
when even the evil are far from cheery
in the evil business of brooms and spells, when
even the trusty familiar seems a stranger, and when the monster
most formidable howls his loneliness in boozy self-pity.

The black and the white of things are not, in fact,
for such a night. Gray hairs come sometimes
early to the surly fiend, who wants a friend only;
lumbago may afflict the mad virago; and a Fury
may know the pangs of penury. Such nights are shadowy,
haunted, when from the tear-stined pillow Medusa's head
arises blubbering because she is no lovely thing:
sometimes, the Gorgon rushes to the mirror that will kill her.

Think: the selfish giant may have no choice
but to be aggressive, self-reliant; the princesses,
perhaps, are shrieking and not shrinking, and he
is restless, anxious, planning, wishing—wondering,
dare he shut down the dungeon and go fishing?

An ogre with an ulcer has no answer
better than you or I. Night vapors come,
and Time that knits the sleeve of care may leave us bare.

Those tyrants who with shouts of "Bravo!"
greet the headsman; torturers who spend their Sundays
brushing up on bastinado; and the simplest victim—
all have their introspective troubles. Misunderstood, the mind
and not the cauldron bubbles; who from the iron maiden
with the squeaky hinges gets the worser twinges?
Are things, then, what they seem? Why does the raven scream?
The bats have fled the tower. Now hoots the sleepless hour.

LORNA BEERS

TOP HAT AND TALES

My granny saw the devil walk at twilight,
And after him strode seven crows as black
As he. In deacon's somber broadcloth, high light
Upon his two-toed boots, he wore a jack
Of spades for fob. His ropy tail was twitching
Like Tabby's when she is on prowl and wild
For warm red blood, with more than nervous itching.
My mother said, Stop frightening the child.
I'm frightened now, but not by granny's devil
Who played it straight. Our modern wily fox
Set up the fad for good and bad made level
As necessary parts of paradox.
He says, if we demur at hoof or hue,
Be broad, I'm just another point of view.

"SOFT SELL"

On winter nights the fiddling wind see-saws
Around the house. The barnyard dog howls like
A wolf. Dry creaking timbers fill the pause
And anything could happen. Now clocks strike
Eleven. Emerson Alcott Butt steals down
The stairs to meet the succubus. Her name
Is Flo,—she's selling mattresses. To crown
Hygienic talks on sleep she plays a game.
Her dress, her filmy slip fall to the floor.
She stands in foam, a Venus whose sweet riddle
To every dream is passive paramour.
The bed is wide, no sword lies down the middle
No Cotton Mather warns of soul's duress
Or cites old Puritans who hanged for less.

LAURA BENÉT

THE ROWERS

Have you not fallen asleep to strong men's rowing,
Hearing their oars touch water found deepest peace?
What matters it where the boat is going, going,
Like grass before a sickle in mowing, mowing,
Wave and rowers are blended calmly at ease.

In dream I saw a mysterious boat go drifting,
Her men were stalwart though aging and weatherworn
As the wet blades in unison lifting, lifting,
Under the ghostly moonlight ever shifting,
No sound of voice on the creeping wind was borne.

Before my waking I heard those long oars dipping
Into colder seas on a widening wilder shore,
Stroking and sculling, lifting, dipping, dripping,
Thunderous was the sea water's distant roar.

What manner of burden was it they proudly bore?

BABYLON

Long, hideously long the plodding was
To Babylon. A wet moon like a fate
Hung over his head to haunt and terrify,
As if proclaiming, "You are far too late!"
Wolves crossed his path and rats. Demoniac beasts
Muttered in chorus. A tenacious bog
Sucked off his boots, a sneering wind, his cap.
That promised city seemed a nursery tale
Not to be found on any traveler's map.
Eyes dim, feet wounded and his taper spark
Flickering like uneasy conscience' flame,
He stumbled forward through the shapeless dark . . .
Then walls rose up before him as he came,
Gigantic, fire-blackened, crumbling, showed
The doom of majesty in tower and square,
Once blinding color. Terraces hung in air
Sprouted weed forests where the tiles had glowed,
Blood-red anemones bloomed upon the pyre.
His legs gave way, he was a dot in space,
One grain of sand, a stray seed in the vast.
Bound to the memory of a dazzling past,

He stood there, dumb and trembling at the sight.
Those painful steps he never could retrace,
His journey unfulfilled, the suffering vain,
Since Babylon, his adored of time was gone,
Discovered—vanished—not to find again,
The Babylon he sought by candlelight!

JOHN BETJEMAN

A LINCOLNSHIRE TALE

Kirkby with Muckby-cum-Sparrowby-cum-Spinx
Is down a long lane in the county of Lincs,
And often on Wednesdays, well-harnessed and spruce,
I would drive into Wiss over Winderby Sluice.

A whacking great sunset bathed level and drain
From Kirkby with Muckby to Beckby-on-Bain,
And I saw, as I journeyed, my marketing done
Old Caistorby tower take the last of the sun.

The night air grew nippy. An autumn mist roll'd
(In a scent of dead cabbages) down from the wold,
In the ocean of silence that flooded me round
The crunch of the wheels was a comforting sound.

The lane lengthened narrowly into the night
With the Bain on its left bank, the drain on its right,
And feebly the carriage-lamps glimmered ahead
When all of a sudden *the pony fell dead.*

The remoteness was awful, the stillness intense,
Of invisible fenland, around and immense;
And out of the dark, with a roar and a swell,
Swung, hollowly thundering, Speckleby bell.

Though myself the Archdeacon for many a year,
I had not summoned courage for visiting here;
Our incumbents were mostly eccentric or sad
But—*the Speckleby Rector was said to be mad.*

Oh cold was the ev'ning and tall was the tower
And strangely compelling the tenor bell's power!
As loud on the reed-beds and strong through the dark
It toll'd from the church in the tenantless park.

The mansion was ruined, the empty demesne
Was slowly reverting to marshland again—
Marsh where the village was, grass in the Hall,
And the church and the Rectory waiting to fall.

And even in springtime with kingcups about
And stumps of old oak-trees attempting to sprout,
'Twas a sinister place, neither fenland nor wold,
And doubly forbidding in darkness and cold.

As down swung the tenor, a beacon of sound,
Over listening acres of waterlogged ground
I stood by the tombs to see pass and repass
The gleam of a taper, through clear leaded glass,

And such lighting of lights in the thunderous roar
That heart summoned courage to hand at the door;
I grated it open on scents I knew well,
The dry smell of damp rot, the hassocky smell.

What a forest of woodwork in ochres and grains
Unevenly doubled in diamonded panes,
And over the plaster, so textured with time,
Sweet discoloration of umber and lime

The candles ensconced on each high pannelled pew
Brought the caverns of brass-studded baize into view,
But the roof and its rafters were lost to the sight
As they soared to the dark of the Lincolnshire night:

And high from the chancel arch paused to look down
A sign-painter's beasts in their fight for the Crown,
While massive, impressive, and still as the grave
A three-decker pulpit frowned over the nave.

Shall I ever forget what a stillness was there
When the bell ceased its tolling and thinned on the air?
Then an opening door showed a long pair of hands
And the Rector himself in his gown and his bands.

* * * * *

Such a fell Visitation I shall not forget,
Such a rush through the dark, that I rush through it yet,
And I pray, as the bells ring o'er fenland and hill,
That the Speckleby acres be tenantless still.

ROBERT BLOCH

NIGHTMARE NUMBER FOUR

(With apologies to the late Stephen Vincent Benét)

We thought it was a joke
When we read it in the papers that afternoon—
About some nut inventor down in Georgia
With a device for printing matter on air.
No, it wasn't skywriting again,
Or television. It printed matter on the air for you to read:
It was permanent
And wouldn't blow away.

But there it was.
Just an item in the paper. It didn't mean much.
Something to laugh about, or tell your wife,
"What will these guys think of next?"
And most people didn't even see it, I suppose.
That's why it came as such a shock
When the advertisers took it up.

I remember the morning
When I looked out of the window and saw the sign hanging
there
(Just hanging there, you understand, in bold black letters)
Reading:
"HAVE YOU TAKEN A GOOD LAXATIVE LATELY,
OLD TIMER?"
I know I blinked.
The letters were black as ink, but solid to touch:
They hung there and they didn't go away.

Well, this was how it started—and on the streets, going to
work,
There were more signs to read.
“EAT REEKIES—THEY’RE GOOD FOR YOU!”
“HAVE YOU HAD YOUR WINTER FUR RELINED?”
and
“GET YOUR CRANKCASE DRAINED.”
Passengers puzzled on the bus, but we weren’t sore, then.
The signs were small at first;
Just two feet high, black and white—“POOPSI-COLA
HITS THE SPOT.”

After while we noticed the men spray guns
Like insect exterminators, spraying the letters out.
Little crowds used to watch them do it.
And the TV comedians made gags,
And the columnists filled their columns,
And somebody wrote a song about it.
But nobody wrote indignant letters to the newspapers
Yet.

Then they began spraying signs over the lawns
And over driveways
And above houses
And the streets were choked with signs, signs, signs.
Black specks of printed matter, wherever your eyes turned.
But the air was free. Wasn’t it?
The courts thought so.

Motorists complained the signs blocked visibility.
There were accidents.
Men were killed, but the ads went on.
To sell more bread.
To sell more tonics to help digest the bread.

To sell more laxatives to get rid of the bread
Once it was digested.
And then, of course—they advertised more bread again.

That's how it was, and we might have gotten used to it, in
time

If only the signs hadn't started getting BIGGER
And THICKER.

Two feet tall in the air.

Then five feet.

Then ten.

And the letters a foot thick.

The air was black. Foul.

There was some secret ink they used, and when you breathed
it,

It made you retch.

But that was all right, too.

One of the signs said "USE FLETCH'S PILLS AND
STOP RETCHING."

There was a cure

But not for blindness, not for insanity,

Not for the perpetual sight of signs

Floating over Broadway and Park Avenue.

Twisting between clotheslines in the slums,

Weaving across the swimming pools on palatial estates,

Blocking the boulevards

Shadowing the sun in a black blot over the city—

The signs, reading, "TENDER SKIN LIKES VELVY-
DOWN TISSUE,"

"EAT MORE KOHLRABI WEEK,"

"GET RID OF YOUR UGLY PIMPLES!" and
"THROW AWAY YOUR TRUSS!"

And then they made the signs in color to light up the night,
And blindness and insanity began to pile up vital statistics.
Regular advertising died
Because this was cheaper and more profitable.
What if the signs did tangle up in streaming criss-crosses?
What if you looked out of the window and saw nothing
but reams of it,
Illegibly imprinted on air?

They got the insects to work, then.
Inoculated them, I suppose. Trained them, perhaps
To void out the signs.
No more sprayers.
Insect thoraxes spewed out the signs in patterns.
They must have bred the bugs on Madison Avenue.
Some genius thought it up—
The Man in the Gray Flannel Overalls.

Of course we tried to pass some laws.
We always do, when it's too late,
And it was too late now.
There were insects everywhere. Insects in clouds,
Insects in black swarms, spurting from distended bellies;
Each forming his little letter—its dot, his dash, her period.
Of the end.

Too many insects.
Too many to train, too many to control. So they bred.
Bred, and flew, and devoured.
They made nests in crates of VELVY-DOWN. They
nibbled at the trusses.

They bored through boxes of FLETCH'S PILLS.
It didn't do any good to reline your winter furs.
They ate them, too.
And bred again.

The skies were really black now. Black with flying forms.
It was too late.
The plague came, and then the famine.
They called out the Marines.
But how are you going to bayonet an insect?
And pretty soon,
What with plague and famine and all,
There weren't any Marines any more.

There weren't any consumer goods left to consume,
Nor any consumers.

And—belated blessing!—there weren't any advertisers either.
Just the insects
Flying aimlessly through ink-spattered air, droning by the
signs
Made meaningless through lack of eyes to read them. And
insect retinas
Flickered down on an empty world where there was nothing
left
But words.

Lucky for me
I saved a few to write this down . . .

SAMUEL M. BRADLEY

THIS HERE IS HELL

As I fell—from mind-perch precarious—
Avaricious about me Ant-men ran,
Grim hunters of host. Their heap of crumbs
Lay nine circles deep, with imperious
Three-faced Ambiguity fat at the end.
How could I struggle? Armored Ants ran
With honey-grails and grains of sin
From the plunder of Out to the altar of In.
I saw the old god they ran to defend—
In shifty light, near: Fleshless Man.

“One for the money, two for the show,
To Grandfather’s house we go, we go.
Settled, secure, what we say will endure
For, sacerdotal, we know what we know.
We, the true race! Our feelers of taste
Prey upon change and rearrange
Atoms of knowledge in Final Change.
Judge tenderly, as you sit at our feast.
We are the chosen. You are the beast.”

Low I lay. And the rant of the Ant
Crept over me—as incredibly mean
As hell-assignment by the Florentine.
Had I been large? Why did I fall
To inquisitions of the small?
Low I lay, dulled by the weight of all,
All trivial cant. What seemed obscene

Was Corruptible Man—till bones are picked clean
By a properly-fanged Purifying Machine.
“Will I—” I murmured “become three-faced?
Fastidious Ants, how do I taste?”

ROC'S BROOD

Claw-free love, when I was
bedded young in roc's
highest sweet, and wind was
brutal with sighing, how could I
—thieving from my tyrant—
know the wings? All I knew
was the nest foulings and
close heat of love

as I plotted to dislodge
the sky-stayer. Would I
never know his years, his tearing
from the earth? I shrieked
his darkening of stars. For his breast
crushed down, weighed with
a thousand distant ruinings
and tired heartbeat.

Gorged me on python, hippo,
elephant, whale, but robbed
me of strength most
hungered for: lordship alone
with power to love. Abyss
hemmed me and his coming was

eclipse. Now he does not come,
and I, grown great in skill,

have my fill of prey.
I retreat to the old round
possession where I was
offended by the truth and therefore
possessed. Clutch the past
and mark the wounds. And fluff
the nest, considering how I may
cheat death in illustrious style.

JOSEPH PAYNE BRENNAN

ONE DAY OF RAIN

One day of rain and railing winds
I walked the street my family knew.
What I sought was lost in time;
Yet I searched, while strange winds blew.

Alien eyes that met my own
Were blank or fearful, hard, remote.
I felt as if their owners' hands
Were talons twisted toward my throat.

For fifty years the street was home,
A sun-filled street where great elms spread.
I watched the slow eternal rain
And knew at last that I was dead.

GHOST-TOWN SALOON: WINTER

The bar was black with blistered age,
Rat-gnawed, beetle-drilled.
Floor boards creaked and squealed.
While I stood, deciphering the dust,
Suddenly, through the tarnished skeleton
Of a dim and twisted chandelier,
Flakes of snow began to fall.
The room was ice; they didn't melt.
Down they came, another dust.
The one split poker table
Played with spinning whorls of snow;
The wrinkled bar turned virgin white.
Standing there, alone and still,
Charmed to a reminiscent mood,
I felt an eerie certainty that all
The roaring knights of gold and guns
—Harlots, aces, spilled whisky—
Ached for resurrection out of time.
There was none. Only this fall
Of winter snow, reaffirming death.
I crossed the clattering icy floor,
Looked back at the threshold's edge,
And eighty years of silence closed again.

THE HUMMING STAIR

And will tomorrow come? And if it comes,
Will mackerel nets return their Silver catch?
Will postmen drop their letters in the box?
—Or will a sly, uncertain stranger lift the latch?

Someone with knives has slaughtered in the street;
Someone has simpered on the stair, sniggered in the hall;
Someone has shouted, has danced upon the roof—
(Someone you know, someone you feared would fall.)

Crows have come over at night, cawing, cawing;
Owls have been seen in the noonday sun.
If eager apparitions enter flesh,
Where will you hide, which way will you run?

Where will you go when shadow seizes light?
When in your empty room dark mirror shines?
How will you hear your own wild laughter,
When up the humming stair the horror winds?

RECOGNITION OF DEATH

I see now, not far away, the savage pit,
The strangling sea, the web of night, enormous.
I fear them. Murmur words, blur them with myths—
Terror remains. You cannot touch it with talk.
Fear has entered my aging fibers, coiled like an asp.
Henceforth I shall bear it toward the darkness,
And if it casts a shadow in the sun,
Then will the sun be sweeter, while it stays.

THE SCYTHER OF DREAMS

Sleepers are mangled by the scythe of dreams;
Every spastic turning takes a knife.
Out of childhood's thicket creeps the ghost
We thought was banished with the hopscotch squares.

Out of the drunken tunnel of our loves
The old sad terrors slowly real.
Fears have flaming faces; gains are lost.
Naked in our nightmare need, we know at last
The fissures never filled, the crevices we kept.
We glimpse again with eyes that lose their lids
The grey ineffable ghoul of all our days.

THE CHESTNUT ROASTERS

"The wind has a tongue tonight," he said,
And knocked his pipe against the chair.
Just then a chestnut jumped and split;
When they looked again he wasn't there.

"Guess I'll hitch my chair up," someone said,
And moved in closer toward the fire.
Sitting warm, they watched the chestnuts,
Whose jumped first and whose the higher.

The next day when they found him dead
Each one recalled what he had said.
They knew that night no wind had blown
And wondered what he might have known.

They lay and pondered in the dark
His enigmatic last remark,
And cursed the chestnut's sudden height
That kept them all from just: "Goodnight!"

THE MAN I MET

I saw his searching eyes at all the bars ;
I heard his hurried feet along the street.
There was no place to go where he had never been,
But every door he opened swiftly closed again.

He bought me drinks and burned me with his eyes,
And when I finally went, he was not content.
What he sought was always just as far,
Yet he always hustled to another crowded bar.

He came and went until the lights flicked off,
While autumn followed autumn down the sky.
A hundred polished mirrors held his face;
The unexpected clock deleted every trace.

THE SERPENT WAITS

Beneath a withered bush the serpent waits.

The bee is treading gold in secret hexagons,
The goshawk turns on tides of glittering air
—But the little leaves are whispering of death,
Death of the Race of Man, the arrogant ape
Whose lethal atoms shine like living suns,
The swarming breed that hungers for the night.

Beneath a withered bush the serpent waits.

GRANDFATHER'S GHOST

Under the elms, on our city street,
I met my grandfather, eighty years dead.
His high silk hat was sleek and new;
His gold-topped cane was glittering.
He smiled and bowed and stopped to talk:
"Time turns back or time spins forward;
Either you're a ghost or I am dead!"
And he twirled his ebony cane.
Out of the corner of my eye
I saw a sulky whirling by. . . .
I turned and ran in panic flight
And then the street dissolved from sight!

THE LAST PAGAN MOURNS FOR DARK ROSALEEN

Gold-headed Finn has ridden away;
The Hound of Culainn sleeps—
Who has chided my Dark Rosaleen
That she weeps?
Remembers and weeps?

The might of Cormac is no more;
Knocknaria shelters Maeve—
Who has doubted my Dark Rosaleen
Dreams of the grave?
Of the cairn-littered grave?

He of the Wine-Red Hand is gone;
Kellach, the last bard—

Who had denied my Dark Rosaleen
Finds the way hard?
Forsaken and hard?

The day of Dunsuanna's chief is done,
By Cathbar sleeping, brothers lost—
Pity you not my Dark Rosaleen
So wakeful and tossed,
So grieving and tossed?

OSSIAN

I am an old man now
And still a pagan.
My words are motes
Aloft in shadow.
The friends I knew
Are legend-dwellers
Or underneath a cairn.
And yet I think
—By my white beard!—
That olden host still waits,
Holding their horse
In some high windy place.

THE WIND OF TIME

This night of frosty wind and stars
The mind in its own cold house
Returns down corridors of dark
Seeking its lost sad images

In some haunted winter room
Her still white face awaits me yet;
Her gothic gift and her impassive grace
Stain the towering darkness like a star.

The wind that sweeps this labyrinth
Racks the empty earth with grief.
It is the antique wind of time
Which rushes with its phantoms through my heart.

EVERY ANAMEER

Instead of swinging from a beam
In the barn's sweet summer dust,
Every Anameer walked down the road
And like a muskrat took the pond.
The smoky hills held sapphire heat;
Tiger lilies lifted orange flanks
Along the edge of aromatic knolls
—But Anameer sank down like sin,
Past spotted turtles, catfish, frogs,
Down to silt, down to tangled snags—
And there he stayed until the grappling hook,
With lack of ceremony, fished him out.
He was middle-aged, robust,
A bachelor, neither rich nor poor.
The catfish must have marveled at the sight
As Every dropped in their domain.
The turtles may have nibbled at his ears.
All *we* could do was transfer him from water
Into earth—and ever go on wondering
What made him leave a load of hay
Half forked—horses hitched
And standing in the open barn.

We never solved the riddle, never will,
And maybe never want to.
But that team of horses waiting in the barn
Haunts us as no answer ever could!

NIGHTMARE

Beyond the thickets of my self,
Beyond the barrier of dream,
I walked a lurid wilderness.

Under a sky of slate,
Over a landscape of stone,
I stumbled with my fear.

Down dim remembered aisles
I met the flaming dead
With eyes like fiery jewels.

Each one stared and beckoned,
Each one groped in haste
And fled down paths of stone.

In swift pursuit a chittering ghoul,
Quickened with questing glee,
Leaped like a dog unleashed.

Beyond this phantom chase,
Moored on a lake of mist,
Squatted the ultimate cave.

Fringed with bearded slime,
It waited with gaping mouth,
A door of final doom.

On the shores of that lake,
By the waters that never stirred,
I stood like a statue of fear,

Till out of the nightmare wood
With flaming eyes and fleshless feet
The phantom chase returned.

Terror split the sky!
My sudden hopeless scream
Shattered the shell of dream.

JULIAN BROWN

MR. RIPLEY PARODIES MR. NASH—OR VICE VERSA

Now, except that he had two heads, Mr. Dooley was in most ways a perfectly normal human being,
But the way strangers would gape, you would think it was something from Mars, or Mrs. Roosevelt doing an imitation of Elvis Presley that they were seeing.
Of course it was a bit unusual that one head sported the elegant locks of a Tony Curtis, though maybe not as impeccably disheveled, and perhaps a smidgen thinner,
While the other one gleamed like that of Yul Brynner;
And it was a trifle odd, that with one mouth he was as fluent As a Dale Carnegie pursuant,
While with the other, he would invariably stammer;
And, oh yes, his third arm was formed in the shape of a hammer;
But when it came to patching up playpens, laying carpets, or building pergolas for rhododendrons,
This was more of a help than a hendrenze,

Which made Mr. Dooley very popular with all the neighbors,
Because not only could he help them with unwieldy labors,
But unlike ordinary people, who become extremely inarticulate with a
mouthful of nails or tacks, he could hold the tacks in the mouth
with which he stammered,
And entertain them with tidbits of gossip with his other mouth while
he hammered.
But his forte was singing in a high contralto, accompanying himself
on the glockenspiel at the same time,
And the people thought it especially sublime
When he would do his satirization of Margaret,
And if by chance he would hit a wrong note, or in any way deviate
from the target,
He could continue contraltoing and swear at himself with his stammer-
ing mouth like ex-president Truman;
Which is a feat never before accomplished by mortal, or shall we say
human,
So, believe it or not, Mr. Dooley is living proof that the anonymous
sage who said two heads are better than one, was not speaking
symbolically, actually,
But factually.

WINIFRED ADAMS BURR

OPENING DOOR

I know an old house, grey with years,
Whose front door opens when no one hears . . .
A low, worn sill, an ivied wall
Report no footfall, no sound at all.
When embers fade beneath the fender,

When stars have turned westward in their splendor,
Through draughty dark one sees them spin,
Though no one went out—and none came in.

Nor is there bolt—lock—key
That can abate this mystery:
Folk mutter, finding the door ajar,
"How determined these north winds are!"

And sometimes in this tent of flesh
Where I must dwell alone
There'll be a door that opens wide
At a wandering overtone—
 Wind in the woodbine,
 Glint of moon
 On silvered rushes
 Where hylas croon:
Yet who opens that door, or who comes in,
Whether angel, wraith or harlequin,
I never can know nor tell at all—
Though vistas open where once was wall . . .

GHOSTS

Now night walks down the garden path
 with slow silver slipper,
The Dragon's coil about her girt
 And in her hair, the Dipper.

Limned in lines of fiery frost
 The amaryllis burns;
How silent to the moon-bright sky
 The passion-flower turns.

Think how all love since time began
Has flickered out to ember,
Only the pole star and night wind
To remember.

This garden is compact of ghosts . . .
Whose is this pale shrine?
On someone's grave I step tonight—
Oh, who will walk on mine?

SARA KING CARLETON

GRAND FINALE

"Oh, what a ball it will be!" they said,
dusting the cushions gold and red,
opening shutters, windows, doors,
down on their knees polishing floors.
Maids of the scullery, mops in hand—
what an industrious, eager band,
cleaning the hall with might and main
for the long-lost gentry to come again.

Tables shuddered on damask white
as they worked far into the murky night;
then a wind from over the dark bay came
shaking the dripping candles' flame,
and waters turned with a quick sea-change
to a curdling color of evening . . . strange.
Out of the beech grove, crunch of wheels,
creak of harness, and clop of heels!

How could the scullery maids but stare
as skeletons robed in gorgeous wear
left their carriages, swept within
to the music of harp and violin,
lilting them through a marble hall,
greeting a host not there at all—
greeting a host who waved them on
with a pomp and circumstance long since gone.

Then flinging their mops and pails aside,
they scuttled like rabbits, terrified—
these scullery maids in blue and gray,
themselves a part of another day.
And no one was left to see or tell
how the castle crumbled, the towers fell,
when all that was known of that gala night
vanished in air like a blown-out light.

LIN CARTER

LUNAE CUSTODIENS

When once the sunset dyes the west with red
that is the dawn of darkness, then behold . . .
marmoreal, her pallid visage peers
adown the steep and star-empowdered vault
as she hath done thrice twenty thousand years
since first her task was set by gods of old—
this night to guard the sleeping from the dead.

Unzoned, the Moon her antique vigils keep
over the couched and dreaming somnolent,
against unmemoried, malefic Night,
mother of mysteries, whose spectral brood
shrink from her pallid pentagrams of light,
free, save for this lunar impediment,
to prey upon their souls who dare to sleep.

Serene, remote, she watches over all
that slumber in the dim, sublunar world
on this unhallowed night, accurst, arcane,
when from the coffin and the charnel pit
(the occult realm where mould and maggot reign)
the spawn of chaos wake when day has furled
his banner and the darkness spreads her pall.

Now from unplumbed abysses of the Pit,
nadirs of nightmare, all the legionry
of tomb and sepulchre are free to roam
the drear and mantic wastes uncitied, bare,
or druid woods where horror finds its home,
or coasts which front the acherontic sea,
or shadowed vales of gloom indefinite.

By haunted hills where moonless menhirs lean,
by stagnant moat and ivy-cumbered wall,
dark avenues of graveyard cypress, yew,
and wizard laurel, all the ghouls of dream
seek the unguarded sleeper whereunto
their psychonecrophilic hungers call
unto their feast unholy, that were seen

in rune-writ tome and iron-bound grimoire
upon whose cryptic, sealed, forbidden page

wast writ of old the eldritch laws of dream
 in lost and ocean-drowned Poseidonis.
 Only the Moon, whose silvern-paly beam
 was legend to the primal archimage,
 could save the dreamer from the necrophore.

Virgin of Heaven, from the hordes of Dis
 who seek this night from sleeping minds to slake
 their dark, vampiric thirsts; from the embrace
 of nightmare legions, spawn of the Abyss,
 save us, O Thou who rides the ebon tides of space . . .
 pale Guardian of those who do not wake . . .
 Queen of the Sky . . . *regina coelis!*

THE DREAM-DAEMON

In dreams the Daemon comes, upon the hour
 Of full moon over Arkham; and I see
 The leprous shores of seas unknown to me
 Where Babel-tall, bizarre, the cities tower—
 Black and basalt metropoli of myth
 Athrong with ziggurat and pyramid
 That scale dark skies where ebon moons are hid.
 Is it a dream of Yuggoth, or of Yith?

Or some *outré* and undimensioned sphere
 Beyond the cosmos? I seek not to learn
 Upon what occult world those ruins rear,
 Remembering those books I ought to burn.
 This much I know: the cities and the shore
 Were somehow, somewhere known to me before!

THE SABBAT

"This is the night," the dark-faced stranger leered,
Who had approached me on the lonely streets,
"This is the night the Arkham coven meets."
Before I answered him, he disappeared.
At nightfall I went down the cellar steps
Through that locked, secret door that I had found
That led by dank ways tunneled underground
Into a caverned abyss in the depths.

Weak with a mingled loathing and desire,
I joined the hooded throng that milled and swirled
About the standing stones red-lit, with fire
That flamed up from the bowels of the world.
One hailed me, "Azath!", who was robed in red.
"That was your uncle's coven-name," he said.

CARCOSA

It was a place that I had known before,
This bleak and barren, desolate expanse
Through which I wandered in a dream-like trance.
And there, in sombre splendour by the shore
Of Hali, dark an ancient city stood,
Black monolithic domes and towers loom
Stark, gigantic in the starless gloom
Like druid menhirs in a haunted wood.

And there it was I heard Casilda sing,
Wandering madly through the winding ways
Beneath a sky with strange black stars ablaze,
Where flap the yellow tatters of the King.

—O, do not seek to know, nor ever ask
The horror hidden by the Pallid Mask!

DARK YUGGOTH

There is a world deep in the seas of night
Past the last planet, on the farthest rim
Of curving space, where by some cosmic whim
It wheels and reels beyond the shores of light;
There in the howling dark, where eye of man
Can never see its lone, imperial place
Far in the blackest depths of elder space,
Nor astronomic glass may ever scan.

This is the planet that Alhazred knew,
Beyond the measured, known and numbered nine,
Lost and alone where never suns do shine
Nor soft winds blow, nor skies are ever blue.
Far in the nightmare deeps beyond our sight
There the Black Planet rides the tides of night.

MABEL MACDONALD CARVER

SEMI-PRIVATE

Beyond antiseptic white
of curtained barrier—
a whispered dialogue.

Is it that unseen one
who spoke in erudite words
 but yesterday
from his uneasy bed
 of the uncertainty
of extra-sensory perception?

Or is he, perhaps,
not engaged in conversation
with his alter-ego,
 but dead,
having silently been wheeled
 to mortuary?—
another, quite alive,
 delirious occupant
there in his stead?

ADDICT

I shall just put away this hoarded bottle,
here, back of a loose stone,
snug, secure. None will care
to walk in the haunted room.
They say spirits do not need the stuff
in order to forget,
but I shall return,
nor Hell nor Heaven hinder me.

I shall keep a neat memorandum of the place
in a secret brain cubicle.
On some wind-swept night
I'll come and swallow the lot.

I'll leave behind my two long white braids
for identification.

Hairs grows on, you know, and on . . .

GERTRUDE CLAYTOR

SORCERESS

Against the moon now eldritch-thin,
I saw my lady ride the breeze
and lo, she touched the tip of trees,
but found no branch to shelter in.
Never a twisted bough to hide
her from the clamoring of tongues
that called to all the countryside
like bells with brazen lungs.
Between two worlds, unsanctified,
where vagrant spirits wait,
held by my love and by her loves,
by charity and hate.
Invisible by day she moves
above sly cruelties—
and small she is, and fair, and fair,
diaphanous as sky and air—
and now a part of these.

THE STAIR

The stair is curved, the railing high,
And through the window overhead
The sky comes in, the evening sky,
Or with the dawn shows red.

The stair is long, the spiral way
Is choked with shadows night and day.

The spooned-out step before the bend,
The middle landing and the end
Are tributes to the dead.

I see a woman touched with gray,
Who leans against the wall;
I see a lad who cannot play,
I hear a weak voice call.

"Go up, go up, my little lad,
Your toys are in a row.
Come toward the earth, O woman gray,
Touch grass before you go,
For there are open ways untrod
That you may never know."

A barrier rose they dared not pass,
Though many a thought and many a prayer
Was breathed upon the glass.

The stair is dark, the spiral way
Is thick with shadows night and day.

"Go up, go down; repeat, repeat!"
As sharp as frozen rain
I hear the shuffling of the feet
That move, and move in vain.

But some leave hollows in the steps
They will not climb again.

ELIZABETH COATSWORTH

GREEN WOODS

Green are the woods where the lovers wander,
and soft the moss for an April bride.
The young girl pleads but falls back bleeding
with the little pen-knife deep in her side.

Green are the woods where the lovers wander
and the small leaves whisper like things asleep,
where the young man kneels at the roots of the oak tree
and having washed at the spring, drinks deep.

It is their story the thrush is telling
again and again through the twilight hush:
"She was so fair, so fair and so gentle,"
"So gentle, so young," mourns the thrush.

EMPTY HOUSE

Knowing what's possible, one knows
this is impossible.
There stands
the empty house, thin-framed, unpainted,
dull with the gray of poverty, in fields
maned with rough golden-rod, unprofitable.

Knowing what's possible, one could not say
that ugly house stands patient, with one gable
forlornly cocked upon the rutted road

to hear, to see—but no, the house is blind.
Someone took boards to nail across the windows
so restless boys and vagrants, birds and sun
might never enter.
The house can't look out.

And yet, and yet . . .
there in the ugly gable
shows a dull gleam of glass as if the house
had torn away a blindfold board to see—
the house? one knows that is impossible:
houses are helpless, houses have no hands,
a house could never pull the screaming nails
even from rotten wood. It's quite impossible.
Unless, of course, the wind,
unless
the wind
came to its help.
But that's impossible.

THE WIND SHRIEKED LOUD

What I know
no one dreams.
The wind that night
covered all screams,
the moon preferred
to mantle her head,
the cook and butler
were long in bed.

I could not sleep
the wind was so loud,

a white eye glared
from a tattered cloud,

I could not sleep
I went down the hall,
I never moved,
I saw it all.

No one shall ever
know what took place.
The moon held a darkness
over her face,
the wind shrieked loud
like a passing spirit,
I shall say nothing:
I inherit.

MURDER HOUSE

Abandoned is the house,
abandoned and deserted,
but the ghosts have both invited
other ghosts to enter there.

Ghostly hands are on the knocker,
ghostly faces at the window,
and a wind that sounds like footsteps
hurries up and down the stair.

Wild and overgrown, the lilacs
crowd and peer between the shutters,
burrs and nettles, rank and evil,
press against the kitchen door.

Now there's company in plenty
on that lonely, lonely hillside
for two ghosts, who by death's mercy
need know loneliness no more.

DANIEL WEBSTER'S HORSES

If when the wind blows
rattling the trees,
clicking like skeletons'
elbows and knees,

you hear along the road
three horses pass,
do not go near the dark
cold window-glass.

If when the first snow lies
whiter than bones,
you see the mark of hoofs
cut to the stones,

hoofs of three horses
going abreast—
turn about, turn about,
a closed door is best!

Upright in the earth
under the sod
they buried three horses,
bridled and shod,

Daniel Webster's horses—
he said as he grew old:
"Flesh, I loved riding,
shall I not love it, cold?"

"Shall I not love to ride
bone astride bone,
when the cold wind blows
and snow covers stone?"

"Bury them on their feet
with bridle and bit.
They were fine horse—
see their shoes fit."

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

ATLANTIS

Legend has sunk it where the shoreless foam
Goes scudding over unplumbed leagues of sea.
But I have seen it glittering, dome on dome,
Spire on spire, in castled sovereignty;
And watched ten thousand million men that streamed
Across the ages on its squares and docks;
The huckster bawling, and the seer that dreamed,
The captain helmeted for war's iron shocks;
Poets and lovers, merchants, farmers, priests,
Beggars and clowns . . . till at one cindery blast
They vanished like a drove of slaughtered beasts
Into the mist and silence of the past,—
Less than a fable to one later clan
That winds the way of Atlantean man.

THE WATCHER

A Watcher stood on the brink of time
In a dim and lonely place,
And listened to the spheres that chime,
And saw the systems reel and climb
Across the blanks of space.

He viewed the swirling ages pass with firefly glints and gleams,
And a thousand thousand centuries were sparkles beheld in dreams.
He saw the planets bloom and pale, many as jungle flowers,
And galaxies whose worlds were thick as drops in thunder showers;
Flame upon flame in shades and glooms of the candle-lighted vast,
And the suns were puffs that came and went where never a spark could
last;

And the people of the moons and earths, like waves on a windy sea,
Forming and fading, forming and fading, swept by eternally;
And the people of the moons and earths suffered and fought and died,
And less were they than foam against that glittering shoreless tide.

But the Watcher scanned the wilderness with a smile upon his brow,
Perceiving time and space as one, one great unchanging Now.
"The planets all," it seemed he said, "the suns, the nebulae,
The unthinkable lives of Milky Ways are all contained in me.
In me the acorn of the bough, the star-swarm in the pit;
All things that ever were abide in me, the Infinite;
In me all epochs, races, worlds, the sea, the land, the sky,
The spirit of all breathing things, the love that cannot die,
The light that bathes the myriad globes and blesses all am I!"

*A Watcher stood on the brink of time
In a dim and lonely place,
And listened to the spheres that chime,
And saw the systems reel and climb
Across the blanks of space.*

GRANT CODE

THE HIGH PLACE AT MARIB

They wrought a pillar from the rock of sacred stone;
They worked at night, they carved in fear, they labored long.
To solemn chant, to wailing song, to beaten gong,
Night after night, a hundred slaves in unison
Chopped off the flakes that hid the form that lay within—
The column seen within the bulk of prostrate rock.
Stone fell to dust; chips sprang before the chisel's shock,
The ring of bronze, the hammer stroke made solemn din.

Without the gates of Marib stretched the furrowed plains,
The rustling crop, the heavy vine, the laden tree.
Beyond the land, the grey sails shook across the sea.
Beyond the plain, the grey sands stretched to mountain chains.
The city Marib, strong with walls, that ancient town,
Lay in the south, in Yeman lay, the Sabaean land,
With Minaean walls and Minaean foes on every hand,
While from the north the nomad tribes came sweeping down.

The stars hung low above the roofs of ruddy tiles.
The sky was deep and purple-black and filled with wings.
The temple girls stroked instruments of seven strings.
The temple boys burnt incense brought from Indian isles.
The low stars watched; the braziers glowed; the Levites sang;
The robes of priests were flickering with pallid green;
The shadows moved; and in the dusk, the dusky sheen
Of many slaves moved to the chime the hammers rang.
The temple boys and temple girls paced all unrobed,
Gleaming with oils expressed from spices grown afar;

And here a brazier glimmered back and here a star,
While incense rose, and hammers beat, and music throbbed.

Night after night, without the gates, beyond the plain,
The rock dissolved, until at last the pillar lay
Thrice seven cubits, smooth as bronze, and gleaming grey
As twilight sea, as desert sand, as lines of rain.

Beside the pool of Ashtoreth, the sacred pool,
They raised the rock until it stood against the sky.
The stars were hid behind a mist that gathered nigh,
All grey with dread and fringed with fire, sea-green and cool.
And wings were heard, and songs were hushed, and fires went black,
And Levites fell upon the ground, and children wailed.
Then peacefully the wings were gone, the darkness paled,
The stars returned, the song arose, the gates swung back.
The mighty gates, the brazen gates of Marib swung.
The inner gates, the temple gates, stood open wide.
With torches lit, the long procession passed inside.
Behind the gates, the solemn rites of praise were sung.

But when the dawn across the bright Arabian sea
Awoke the drowsy temple hymn and lit the fires
Upon the altar carved from stone, when silver wires
Throbbed into song, when measured dance of litany
Wove on the floor with children's feet the magic lines;
Then suddenly upon the height of Marib's wall
Arose a shout, a cry of fear, a ringing call.
Beyond the gates, beyond the grain, beyond the vines,
Beyond the rim of desert grey, where all alone
Beside the pool the night before one shaft was reared,
Now by the pool of Ashtoreth two shafts appeared,
Two grey stone shafts, wreathed round with mist and pink with dawn.

Night after night within the town they prayed in fear;
In holy fear they prayed within the gates of bronze;
Until at dawn upon the wall the clarions
Rang out to tell another shaft of stone was there.
Out of the grey and awful nights, the columns came.
Grey one by one they joined the shaft the Sabaeans wrought.
Far through the night they marched across the plains and sought
The holy shaft beside the pool of holy name,
Till seven shafts circled the pool where one was raised.

Then came a deeper night when sleep oppressed them all,
Even the brazen-coated watch upon the wall,
So that they woke as dead men wake, by death amazed.
But in that night no pillar came mysteriously.

NEWS OF MY FRIENDS

You believe in a live city
Babbling up to the moon,
But I walk in a still village,
Forest grown.

My path that I stroll daily
With no one to meet
Fifty, a hundred years ago
Was the village street.

It runs from a wheatfield green as a graveyard
To the ruined race of a mill;
Between heaps of boulders tumbled inward
The stream flows still.

Yes, I like the news of your city
When you are here to tell me. When you are not
I have often meant to read the daily papers.
I just forgot.

They are so eager, these quaint people,
Forgotten, unknown
To tell me the gossip of ghost cottages
Fallen and overgrown.

HIGHWAY TO NOWHERE

Bare mud, slippery, wet and brown,
Yellow weeds, dark strips of sod,
A tuft of grasses against a stone,
A new white cottage: I like this road.

A truck with vegetables and fruits
Stops in the driveway, and a noise
Of doorbell and shouting and claxon toots
Smothers the wind's shrill whining voice.

Out of the window a man calls down;
A child and a woman shout their orders.
I am still too close to the thing called town
And the thing called life. I will cross the borders.

Climbing a hill, this farm-road labors
To a field of squares marked off by ditches
And hopeful street-signs, read only by neighbors
Who need no real estate, ghosts and witches.

THE NIGHT REFUSES A DREAMER

In spite of purple sky, moonless,
Sweet air, street lights, leaf melodies,
He who walks alone feels his distress
Enlarged by these.

In the midst of enormous scenes and stage effects
Where love should be spoken
One voice is stricken silent that only expects
Silence unbroken.

A sob dies where a light is, a scream in the dark;
No one passes.
Nothing really moves in the empty park
But wind in the grasses.

Beside the river, others meet and are still;
Yet nothing tonight
Consoles the lost in the darkness of the hill
Or the depths of light.

To one who lies alone in the deep grass
A strange dream,
Shrill distant songs and blinding stars pass
In heartless stream.

PLAYGROUND OF THE PIXIE

To plant corn here was a futile whim:
In ridges of mud thin stalks are growing;
Shining ditches and saucers brim
With pools and rivulets overflowing.

In a pond where ice was harvested
Grows a thicket of dark blue-green cattails;
A tangle of rusted iron shows red,
Broken engines and upturned wheels.

Fairy gold soon turns to rust
In spite of the powerful science of man.
Iron is a magic hidden in dust;
Dig it up if you dare and can.

Someone banked up the earth to build
A melting dike that the rain floods scorn,
Making of ice-pond and of field
Twin swamps of cattail and of corn.

There is a secret in this place
Never discovered. Something is hidden.
Shadows conceal a laughing face
From those who come and depart unbidden.

Every summer between these hills
Mocks the plowman's labor and pain.
The forest moves and the water spills
Forever and ever after the rain.

What things grow here shoulder to shoulder
Out of moss and bull-briar, wild grape and grass?
Black haw, dogwood, maple, alder
Skunk-cabbage, blackberry, sassafras?

What should grow but a sound of voices,
Hush of hope and whisper of fear,
A man who stops and puzzles and passes,
A watching eye and a listening ear?

FOREBODING

Here in this shabby house at dead of night
While the rain falls on the new leaves and wet flowers,
I tell you this is the end of this world of ours,
The end of us and the friends who taught us delight.
The apple blossoms lie in a ruin of white
After the rain has fallen. The city towers
Still break the air, but their magic has lost its powers,
Man is defeated, stripped of his might and his right.

Now there is only the naked, pale-skinned crowd,
A ravenous pack, ranging the hills of spring,
Praying in vain to the ageless laughing Lord.
I remember a Garden closed with a flaming sword,
Filled with every luxuriant living thing
Except for the exile, man, bereft and cowed.

BALLAD OF TWO KINGS

I saw the spectre of a king
Go begging through the snow.
He heard the children caroling
And bent his proud head low.
Those children who sang psalms
He stopped to beg an alms:
Pray for King Herod.

The wind blew cold through his white hair
That once was angry red.
No crown he wore, His brow was bare.
Snow fell upon his head.

The ice was in his beard.
His sad eyes were afeared.
Pray for King Herod.

Dear little children, Christmas night,
When all your hearts are merry
Pray for the unloved, sinful wight,
Remorseful, cold and weary.
He did you bitter wrong.
After the Child King's song,
Pray for King Herod.

BUILDING OF SAND

I saw an old man with a long white beard
Playing on the sea sand where I once played.
"Father," he said, but only I heard,
"Come here and see what I've made.

His hair was like thin mist blown from a wave;
His skin like the sea sand, wringled and brown,
His voice like the wind's voice, sad and grave.
I came to his side and I stood looking down.

From the heaped wet sand he had modeled a city,
With a long wall curved against the flowing tide.
"Father," he called out, "isn't it pretty?
Isn't it wonderful?" "Yes," I replied.

The moment I had spoken that answer for the dead,
He sprang up and faced me, and I saw that he was blind.
Yet his eyes stared all around me, and his eyes were afraid.
I stood breathless, just too far for his groping hands to find.

"Who's there?" he asked in terror, but I spoke no other word
 As I watched the panic fading and a wonder take its place.
 "Father?" he whispered, and the answer that he heard
 Was the vast water breaking in a syllable like "Yes."

NURSERY RHYMES FOR SURREALISTS

Prayer in Blackout

Now I lay me down to dreams
 Of horror in the air.
 Little use to pray, it seems,
 When the stars despair,
 Raining ruin from above
 On everything I love.

I pray the Lord my soul to keep
 Among the souvenirs:
 Faith and sweethearts, smiles and sleep
 In some other years,
 Wasted with our tears.

Nos Moraturi Te Salutamus

God rest you, merry insects,
 Worms and grubs and flies.
 This is now your universe
 Where the last man dies,
 Casting down his sword and crown
 As the stench rises.

Man was once a crawling thing
 In the ancient slime;

Man has spread a living wing
Once upon a time.
Rusted with his dynamos,
Broken with his wall,
Now he leaves his world to those
Most despised of all.

Still the universe above
Shows no great despair.
In the egg and the cocoon
Life is everywhere.

Epitaph for a Wooden Soldier

This mutilated doll might be
The hero of a tinsel star,
Where mannequins themselves at war
Perish as awkwardly as we.

Here in the stricken nursery
Where child is god, and puppets are
As flesh and blood to heaven afar
One broken toy is agony.

I dreamed a god and he was just
A child with many a priceless toy
And all of us had come to play,
But fought, broke, soon were cast away
Where Playmate lay flung down in dust
Mourning a broken soldier boy.

BEVERLY CONNELLY

2000 A.D.

The lamps inside the house
lay dark and still. The wanderer
wondered why.
In the tremendous silence
his terror-lifted eyes
saw that the roof was the sky!

TESTIMONY

Why does he call
what answer have I
who never knew him well?
He left demanding
I clutch the days
to save for him to sell.

Wrapped in paper
all wrinkled, he cried,
"Whoever finds out before me
has died!"

MARY ELIZABETH COUNSELMAN

ROOM IN DARKNESS

A room in darkness has a fourth dimension
Beyond the height of walls, the breadth of floor.

One falters at the yawning mouth of door,
Ashamed to heed the voice of apprehension
Above the voice of knowledge. *What is there
Which was not there a tick of time ago,
Before the light went out?* Bed, table, chair—
Familiar shapes, they somehow seem to grow
Large and misshapen in the heavy gloom.
One takes a step inside, and gropes ahead
Ten miles beyond the moon, to reach the bed.
*Did some lost planet fall, across the room
There, by the pale square window? What abyss
Yauns where the small hooked rug lay, just in place?*
Trembling, one finds a match—and, armed with this,
Rescues a room from whirling Outer Space.

MARGARET STANION DARLING

COUNTRY LANE

I heard the singing of a thrush
when I came back to the narrow lane,
and then he ceased, and in the hush
though no one passed
I knew again
a footfall on the new Spring grass.

Can falling petals make a sound,
a shadow-sound, unearthly, rare?
I stood in loneliness, earth-bound,
and heard your step, and knew you there.

GUSTAV DAVIDSON

FROM NOTHING STRANGE

From nothing strange, from nothing dread or rare,
A music sounds in the transfigured air.
Somnambulant, I neither sense nor share
The apprehended or the unaware.

Mid seas of time finite and infinite,
Dimensions cycling round me dark and bright,
I bear (a swimmer with no land in sight)
Toward nebulous horizons, washed by night.

DOWNGOING

"I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forebore,
And bade me creep past."—Robert Browning, *Prospice*

This the downgoing, this
the death, the pall on
every seizure, every hope
(whether of labor or delight) ;
this the final night, the final
breath.

And what persuades me that the
flame
of all the troubled glory of the world
is in its faith? Nothing
upon life's darkening slope I see: only
the shadow of a Name, an Image, and a
Wrath.

AMBUSHED BY ANGELS

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world."

—Ephesians 6, 12.

Ambushed by angels and by demons bound,
I wrestle with that hierarchic host,
Knowing them to be only phantom, ghost,
Legend or fable, incantation, myth,
Spirits of air fit but to conjure with.

By day, by night, thronging on every hand,
They stalk and leaguer me, a myriad band.
Vainly I rout them out of sight and mind—
Upon the instant, horned or aureole-crowned,
They shape themselves anew and hem me round.

Thus tricked by fancy or the wintry wood
Wherein I loiter, baffled and beguiled,
I sense, in the vast hush and failing light,
Tall presences, like a believing child.
Nor can I tell the evil from the good,

Demons from daevas, satans from seraphim;
Aeons from thrones, archons from kerubim;
Nor if that world I cannot hope to prove,
Flaming with heavenly beasts, holy and grim,
Is any less real than that in which I move.

AUGUST DERLETH

MOON AND FOG

Moonlight in such places alters faces,
The marsh once known has grown
an unremembered look. Every nook
is dark to moon—the loon
crying and the firefly under this sky
are alien.

But something is there,
intimate in this midnight air,
something that speaks for years older
than these,
something that lingers in half-seen trees,
something that rides the rising fog and shows
where moon glows
least under these newly foreign skies.

Where are the private paradise
and the hidden beast?

PLACE-GHOST

This morning is haunted.
Some ghost forgot to heed the turning hour,
oncoming light.
Crows cry alarm, and pewees move
out where the bright
begins.

Something is in the woods
still dark with night.
I feel it like the crowding close of years
gone by,
where red lobelias flame
and loosestrife glows above
the water, and gentians silently proclaim
their fame.

Not wind, no voice I know.
Something silent in the shadows,
something old,
belonging as the peeper and the owl,
something trees and watery places enfold
as something of their own,
long known, long known.

I hesitate, I pause—
and it makes common cause
with me,
comes out invisibly
here where the trees are thin—
and takes me in.

ALFRED DORN

INVISIBLE PAINTER

Leaves would have been mere leaves
whirling from birdless ribs.
But the shadow of Hieronymus Bosch
stalked from a gallery, leaned over the mind's shoulder,
and brushed November wind with witches' dreams.

Earth, a hag on a barren bed,
flaked away her rags.
Air became a carnival
of scarlet skulls,
and trees turned spines with antlers.
From a frost-furred kingdom
a great cold whistled through the wood
and sank its scythe into each leafless bone.

DARK HOTEL

Death, poker-faced and wearing livery,
stands in our neon-rainbowed night before
a dark hotel, observing silently
the guests who walk to shadows through its door.
The heart, believing where the brain denies,
invokes a world beyond unopened drapes;
we seize the vagaries of occult eyes,
but from those shrouded rooms no word escapes.

We glimpse, or dream we glimpse, frail silhouettes
of vanished friends and lovers wandering there.—
Mind's catacombs of passions and regrets
echo with phantoms melting into air.
The world turns shadow where the doorman stands
with marble eyes and motionless white hands.

REVERSIONS

The dead are born from the dark again,
sung through the seasons, hummed in the brain of rock,
scattered in seas and changed to pearl and coral,

strummed on the harp of morninglight and lyres of rain.
And yet, in vain we seek the dead returning
where seasons turn their wheel of flower and frost,
though flesh is woven back by secret looms
in albs of snow and robes of summer's burning.
The heart that danced in fire, or held repose
like a cave of rubies in a jungle's core,
is only a red sand of atoms, drifting
oblivious in Nirvana of a rose.

Not only in the natural round
of earth and wind and light should be our seeking,
for in the vast unbroken wheel of birth
the shroud unwinds, the whirlpooled dead rebound.
Lips of the lying, like a sea-cold shell,
murmur their last faint word, then lock in sleep;
but silence breaks at birth, when the first cry
of infancy rings back to the funeral bell.
The spirit, swirled from death's nocturnal breast,
curls in its flower of flesh, then bursts from the womb
with pearls of ghost-worlds melting in its fingers,
from death's long interlude of dream and rest.

LEAH BODINE DRAKE

THE WOODS GROW DARKER

We feared the incubus, the hex;
Passing a pond, we crossed two sticks
Against the green-haired water-nix.

Once woods were dark with goblin forms,
But boughs of oak and ash were charms
Against the witch, the nightmare swarms.

We are much wiser now: such fears
Have been an old wives' tale for years.
We have more modern fears these years:

We fear the mind's rank Freudian fen,
The death unleashed from cyclotron,
The Iron Curtain closing down,

The spy, the ships from space we scurry
Through mental woods grown dark and eerie,
With not even twigs of ash to carry.

A WARNING TO SKEPTICS

Don't boast your unbelief in woods!
The dark leaves hide an ancient folk,
And it's unwise to say aloud
That there's no dryad in the oak.

Mock, if you will, the troll and faun
When safe in fire-guarded house
Or on the tamed turf of your lawn—
There no strange Powers will arouse

From ferny sleep in all their wrath
To numb your modern soul with fright:
This side-man's wall we name them myth—
The wilderness reveals their might.

Hush! Do not call the old gods "lies"
When under oak or ash or thorn,
Lest you be taken by surprise
Between the twilight and the morn,

And we could seek you everywhere
And never see, by moon or star,
One glimpse of hand or flash of hair
In any fields where mortals are.

THE POOL

The child came to a pool in the heart of a thicket
Close-hung with alders speckled amber and brown.
Leaves floated like gems on the hazel water.
Shaken with shade, the pool went down and down
Till vision was lost in a gently-moving mirror,
A water-world too strange for human sight.
Roots of a beech writhed down like guardian serpents
Over the pool she leaned in the slanting light.

Slowly a face took shape in the dusky water,
Pale and still and curtained with ferny hair.
Round green eyes gazed up from a flurry of ripples,
Fixed themselves on the child's in a long grave stare.

Breathless, balanced between delight and terror,
Caught in a dream-come-true that she'd dreamed alone—
Of meeting someday a thing from the world of Faërie—
The child still knelt.

Faintly, the first star shone
Over the tapestried trees and the leaf-sweet hollow,
And slowly, slyly, awoke the life of the wild,

While they gazed, one over and one under water,
Each held spellbound by the other, nixie and child.

THE WORD OF WILLOW

Older than Eden's planting, older than elves,
Willows remember a grand world of wet
Whose map was webbed with feathery, walking groves!

They dream of that rich mud, they whisper yet
Of hazy rindled valleys, the hush and drip,
Where willows strode about on yellow feet:

A race not human, although somewhat, with green harps,
Masters of poems and small magics, who could make
Water-spells and runes for roots and sap.

Then Adam woke and named things: the willow-folk
Became all tree because he called them so,
Became sleeping princesses in towers of bark,

And pollarded princes who lost the lore they knew.
Now their children shade sad lovers, burial grounds
And haunted houses. Some of them are resigned now,

Only weep into streams and wring grey gnarled hands
Over wild feet knotted and held tight
In man's tamed earth, all power gone from their wands.

Others grow crabbed from straining against fate,
Are racked into Rackham-crones, hags and grutchers
Huddled in tattered shawls, awry with spite,

Wicked old wicker wizards propped on crutches,
 And hobnobs of witches clutching besoms in bogs,
 Hatching plots against man under their twiggy thatches.

But all sing *Willow, willow!* In shallow quag,
 By dyke and ditch, from osier-holt to holt
 A question sighs along their yellow rags:

*What is the master-rune of our leaf-alphabet,
 The old Word of the Willow that could free us yet
 To be trees as men walking?*

They forget, forget. . . .

THE GODS OF THE DANA

(The Tuatha de Danaan, the race of the gods of Dana,
 are the elder gods of Erin, also known
 as the Shee.)

The gods of the Dana are lords of one small green island,
 They are tall, they have yellow hair, their brows are wide,
 They have magical golden harps swung from their shoulders,
 Their eyes are grey and look not to either side.

They go forth at dusk on fiery faery horses
 Through flowering thorn and over the peaty streams,
 Kings of the ruined raths and the gull-loud places,
 Of the fisherman's song and the lonely herd-girl's dream:

Mider the Green, bearing the spiralling alder,
 And sun-gold Lugh in a nimbus of feathered light,

Bright the Horned scattering pale moon-fire
And Angus the Young circled with birds of white.

They are gods of this island only, narrow their kingdom
Bounded on every side by the screaming seas.
No one prays to them now in the windy mornings—
To Him on the Rood the wild Gael bend their knees.

Yet they ride from the hills at dusk, the gods of the Dana!
They guard the gates of the island east and west.
From the foe without and within they shield her beauty,
Against their terrible hearts her head is pressed.

For they have no other love, the gods of the Dana,
And they gave her long ago the gifts of the Shee:
The eyes of youth, the tongue of a linnet singing,
And the hunger and pride and grief of the restless sea.

THE WITCHES

Across the tapestry-lands of the Middle Ages
Like a murky skirl of clouds the witches ride,
Glooming the hunting-woods and the proud churches.

We picture them: the taggles of hags astride
Boar-pigs and withy-besoms in peaked hats,
Red-cloaked or lewdly nude, under a burred

Moon, flying to Lapland for their Sabbats,
Or hopping hobby-horse to the Druid Stones
To skip to the Devil's loo with prancing goats,

All circling to a drum's beat widdershins;
Or maybe a coven brewing a hurricane
With conjurings of cats and dead men's bones!

We see an old crone humping a brambly lane,
Her hair snarly with imps, or in willow-wicks
Cutting a broom-size nicky; or a bad queen

Turning people to swans by stirring a black
Kettle, or rolled down-hill in a spiked cask.
For all their skill they never had any luck.

What was it she wanted, the witch? we ask.
What was the vision she chased up the chimney-hole
And over the cuckoo's nest at the double risk

Of fire for her body and rackety soul?
Was it just to do somebody a bad turn?
To find a short-cut to wealth by the grace of Hell?

Was it to worship some outlawed holy horn
Or to finger the criss-cross threads of nature's loom
That she'd slip like a weasel through the midnight fern?

She alone could have told us her dark dream
And whatever became of witchcraft? for they say
No woman goes in for witching in these times.

And yet when the moon shines in a certain way
The most unlikely of wives will sense a humming
Along the blood of something deeper than joy,

Older than love, beyond blessing or damning.
Oh, she'll knit beside the hearth, but it's all shamming—
Her soul is off with the owls to a muffled drumming!

BURNHAM EATON

THE UNEXPLORED

I tell you there is nothing there at all
but the dank dark and mildew.
Leave the latch alone; keep to the lighted hall.
There is mold on the cellar wall,
mildew on the cellar door.

The knob turned once, It will not turn again.
Oh turn, time, turn!
Earth-deep light, let the mole if he will, explain.
Buried walls reek of old rain,
mildew on the cellar door.

Turn away from thought of the steep stair.
Why do you stare, stare?
He will not come today. He is not anywhere.
Light every lamp. Dry out the air,
mildew on the cellar door.

Rain is flowers, I tell you—sweet on the hill.
But mold flowers by the keyhole.
The door will dry, light creep through the chill.
Rain drips, drips on a sagging sill;
mildew mocks the cellar door.

INBOUND

What nibbles at the window
when dark winds blow?

Time or a squirrel,
thoughts or the snow?

The pane, although it rattle,
can keep the snow out,
can fend off the squirrel—
but what of doubt?

Secure the lock tightly
so nothing may pass,
but winds of the future
come through the glass.

More nimble than a squirrel,
softer than snow,
all in one direction
the dark winds blow.

SHADOWED

Leave to the street its glare and race.
Come, turn the knob and click the latch.
This is a nineteenth century place
Of fringe, pomander jars and lace
And carven rose to match.

Come in and rest . . . The windows wear
The sunlight sifted through brocade,
And if there's creaking on the stair
It is the years the crossbeams bear.
Nobody is afraid.

The rooms are holding what they hold—
 Are not to any time beholden
 Save measured moments from the scrolled
 Slow pendulum that swings its gold
 And makes the silence golden.

They let us light the chandelier
 And touch the marble mantel—let
 The fire be kindled, chairs drawn near.
 Where is a truer peace than here
 With hosts we have not met?

But glancing in the glass, the eye
 Turns timid from that soundless room.
 You wonder whether, wonder why
 The mirror shows you moving by—
 Or if not you, then whom?

LOST VOICE ON THIS HILL

*Why should I wake and walk tonight
 When everything is still?
 Why should I watch the dead ones walk
 Upon the spirit hill?**

An echo of the song I heard you sing
 Under the years long gone—
 Innocent voice open to the song's woe,
 Playing at sorrow—
 Comes, weaves through all my nights to this one night

* From *Far Off I Hear a Lover's Flute*, by Nelle Richmond Eberhart.

As notes that wove their minor through the trill
Of flute. Now in this dark alone
I listen to the ring
Of no voice there, and take to be my own
At last the lamentation, as a pine will
Where winds noiseless blow
Into the music of its boughs, sighing.
It brings dark spirits—yours too—into light.

*Why should I wake and walk tonight—
Not question but summons, it sets my feet upon
This ground we loved—when everything is still. . . .*

CHARLES EDWARD EATON

TROPES OF ONE SEASON

I

Violet bloom of summer's end,
The bird neck twisted and the walking stick in splinter:
The portal I gave once to a friend
Meant nothing but a passageway to winter.

What have I to do with these barbarities,
My hangman's rope the grapevine in the trees?
I gave him love, I gave him leave to go,
Half hoping he would founder in the snow.

For if he grasped my secret that blithe season
He would have had my death at once as well—

Better to bring his plunder back to reason,
Swinging the hairy ropes to ring a purple knell.

Those who would rather die than live
Do neither well because they give
Sentence to an earth that does not care
Unless we wait and ripen past despair.

Violent it was though when I took the corded grape,
At the final door, and hung him in the leaves,
And smelled the musty burden of a heart agape
Among the fat unfallen tears in purple sheaves.

II

Look what left me such an autumn hoard !
Pick a part of all it gave,
Roots and shocks and knobby gourd,
And cast a shadow into Plato's cave.

Hair or bone would be as good
If such a savage harvest were your own ;
Whoever carved a heart in wood
Would never seek a breast of stone.

But still for those whose blood is tame,
Or so they thought beneath the classic sun,
Remains the frenzy of the final name
And love itself begotten by the gun.

Across the secret mouth so separately we file
And toss a bloody knife, some shriveled thing
that poorly thrives

Or hold the shock, the gourd against the light and smile
To see how free the shadow dances of all gyves.

III

Fat pumpkin swollen by my door,
Passion so compact and so protuberant,
All the elves that dance along the floor
Had no other thing at last to grant.

Trimmed me down the world that autumn wind
Which left upon the hill my house of stone,
So fatly fringed with summer vine, now thinned
And like an aging head that shows the bone.

Warm in your flesh?—I heard the wind deride,
And something orange and fleshly in my soul
Thrust a brown and summer hand outside
And set the pumpkin, squat and bellied like a bowl.

When first the season nods me by the fire,
I have no fatal quarrel with sleep;
Too much mutters there of all desire
Better foundered under snowy steep.

But hands were meant to set the token,
A fattened relic for a time grown lean and spare,
And when the drifts of whispering snow have spoken,
The orange face sags through like someone buried there.

IV

How yields my house a place for seed,
Brown corn drying in the shock,

The secret apple of the compact breed,
Fleshed sources where no wind can knock?

Nymphs and satyrs have we none?
The shaggy shadow leers a proof;
Wine of breast and belly won,
It rears upon a cloven hoof.

And there she walks among the pods,
Brown-girt and yet as naked as my heart;
It is, I swear, the natural world she trods,
This load I brought by hand and cart.

Say, still, we reap for tenderness—
I do not think she startles half so shy
When what is given for distress
Is all this power tumbled from the sky.

O love, they say, and beat their breast
Who have not trundled in the time of brown;
She scarcely would have come at my behest
If half a world had never fallen down.

V

What am I to do with this autumnal mood?—
Post-autumn nearly now, the black hull, the orange rind.
I, a master in the passionate school,
No longer would be mastered by the brood
Which danced away from my embracing mind
And shared my welcome with the goblin and the ghoul.

Beauty fades, no longer beautiful,
Eludes the life we claim for it in dance.
The well-beloved changes to the troll,
And who can say what mishap of romance
Has caused that melting in the arms
From such clear, formal, to misshapen charms?

So every year must come the moment,
The breaking-off, the rude withdrawal,
When partnerships that seemed a gliding thing
Disport the merely gross, the nearly brutal,
And, in the gap of discontent,
We chide the season's whole imagining.

But why not sit in peace while witches ride
In frenzy from the golden floor?
I built the house, secured the door—
I, alone, with place to hide,
Can give them leave to shriek, to storm,
And glare upon the tyranny of form.

NORMA FARBER

UNICORNS AT HARVARD

Unicorns are astray
in the Harvard Yard.
Their pasterns point and ply
the ice. The trees are gored.

Statues turn and rock
in the Harvard Yard.
Prancers upon the boardwalk
bounce it, board from board.

Old men carrying books
through the Harvard Yard
sniff at snow and sex
and fragrance fleetly furred.

Young men with green bags
in the Harvard Yard
are tripped and fall like logs
to sleep and are not stirred.

Young women fondle beasts
in the Harvard Yard.
White manes are tied to posts,
chill withers are adored.

Go summon the Yard police
to the Harvard Yard.
Unicorns prod our ease,
our decency jeopard,

our maidens madden and muse
in the Harvard Yard,
our matrons kick and confuse
till their mother-milk is soured.

Let the loud-speakers warn,
post a reward
for riddance of unicorn
herds from the Harvard Yard.

Appoint a committee to sit
in the Harvard Yard
and determine which are the fit
and which are the beasts to be barred.

PARKINSON AND THE OCTOPUS

'Work extends so as to fill the time available for
its completion . . . there need be little or no re-
lationship between the work to be done and the
size of the staff to which it may be assigned.'

Parkinson's Law

Parkinson broached the octopus,
to bring him into line.

"Increase like all the rest of us,"
he urged. "Consider nine."

The creature spoke from gloom and glint:
"These suckers seem enough
to organize my sort of stint,
and staff my kind of stuff."

Parkinson said, "Expand, expand."
The mollusk did not flinch.
He took both gent and job in hand.
Eight did it, in a pinch.

WITCHING HOUR

Hear, d'you hear? One blast
at midnight. Mount, and away

from every farthest coign
of Essex County, whisht!
on sticks, and sometimes three
to a besom. Demons, enjoin!

From cider soured, from hank
and daglock, twisted door-
jamb, kink, cantanker of hasp:
come, imps of spectral stink,
incubus get, and spoor,
cramp, babble, rasp,

with poppets of antic pock,
scissors, sieve, and candle,
tic and canker, caddis
and maggot, with cloven sock,
to the witching era. Canter
in blood-red paragon bodice,

come damned from Salmon Falls,
Andover legions, frog-
voiced folk of Salisbury town.
The horn of the polter calls
to Parris's pasture, hag
and haunt. Here chute ye down

from skimming the wizard trees,
weird flock of cackling birds.
Ground your brooms in the grass.
Break open the bread and cheese,
here's mildew and pinch of curds.
Cup up yon brook like a glass

of revelation. So much
for the broth. By fits now rinse
of sin. Hell is a serious revel.
By cane, by crook, by crutch,
the meeting is rapped to a trance
of order. Hark to the devil:

sabbatical sermon proposes
abundance, maypoles, delights
of Christmas, Tuesday Shrove,
gambling and beds of roses,
carnivals and cockfights,
and spastic old-world love

in Massachusetts. Bring
a friend, quick candidate,
next ghostly time. The news
is spade-toad and crow-wing
gospel. All men will yet
live bravely, without excuse

and judgment. Hurrah for the fiend,
earnest as pewter. Hear,
o hear, hard people, about
it. The Salem gusto and game
of doom crackles to cinder.
Lightning dafts the fire.
Behold salvation without
the thunderous cope of shame.

MARGUERITE GEORGE

PANELED IN PINE

Hers was a small room
paneled in pine,
gracefully carved
in a neat design.

There in the peace
of that tranquil nook,
she sat apart
and read her book.

Yet another who sought
for knowledge that day
was paneled in pine
in a narrower way. . . .

She had no need
of the written page
to tell her of life
in any age.

Yet she quietly learned,
where none could look,
what never was found
in any book.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

These tenants sleeping under ground
make no disturbing sound,

their length of wakefulness is done
their lease is long,
their song
is finished—such quiet neighbors,
done with earthly labors,
have earned their rest.

These are the permanent dwellers,
no landlord can eject them,
their sealed doors protect them
from invaders,
all their good or evil
has been recorded
by God or devil
and they were blessed
by what their life afforded.

Their brief biography
is written here
as on a family tree. . . .
Each one inhabits his small house alone,
and they speak ever silently
through stone.

HERE I LIE

Here I lie
roofed in darkness
without a sound,
yet I hear a creeping,
the slow crawl of worm and feel
the seeping of a waterfall;
I am embraced by searching root,
I am the mole's lavish loot.

Silence shouting in this hall
with no voice tells all. . . .
My bones are lime to sweeten earth
from which I came to primal birth.
I will fertilize this spot
for daisy and forgetmenot,
in bright extravagance they'll bloom
inscription for my tomb.

In some flick of time
I will be ghost to haunt the earth
where my green life was spent
in working out new ways
to solve the calculus of days.

RYAH TUMARKIN GOODMAN

THEY KNOW

Ask the dead:
They know
What burning thoughts are budding in the coolest pines,
What sounds are sucked into the marbled dust.
They know
Where spiny shrubs have borne their small red fruits,

Lobed leaves, their green and golds,
In whose perceptive eyes the hawthorn sprigs young shoots,
Trails lacy tendrils splashed in rainbow waves of light.

They know
Without touch the sharpness of the thorn.

Without sight the fluid form of self.
Without taste the last tart sweetness
And the last remembered scent.

Ask the dead:
They know.

FRANCES ANGEVINE GRAY

TENANT

Something lives in this house,
Unseen by my eyes,
Impossible ever to take by surprise.
On the staircase a tread.
As I lie on my bed,
A fleet footfall crosses
The floor overhead.
When I read in my chair,
The sensitive air
Grows suddenly chill.
I glance in the mirror
In startled surmise.
Some image dissolving
Baffles my eyes,
A presence not evil,
Portending no harm,
Yet alien to all things
Familiar and warm.

OTHERWHERE

Oh that I could suavely pass
Scatheless through a looking-glass,
In an oak tree find a door,
On the forest's mossy floor
Lift a clod that hides a stair
Leading down to Otherwhere.

Could I tread some dusky grove
Where the Little People rove,
In the ragged mists of morn
Meet a moon-white unicorn,
Breathe the eerie air that blows
From far realms no mortal knows,
Leafy haunt of leprechaun,
Where through tangled boughs look on
Eyes of dryad or of faun,
Or where naiad's lucent limbs
Gleam through water-lily stems.

Had I talisman to bring
Djinn of lamp or slave or ring,
From a world poised like this
On the brink of the abyss
They might point the way to go
Paths that sages used to know.

TAPERS

Flowers there are, partaking
Of the chill blight of the moon,

Bloodroot with its pulseless gore,
Mandrake's waxen swoon,

Lilies, whose unearthly scent
Breathes a baleful power,
Intricate white columbine,
The passion-flower.

Each of these may work you ill,
But I pray you, turn
When you see across your path
The corpse-flower's tapers burn.

LISA GRENELLE

DEVIL DOLL

She had a beautiful, bitter face.
She dressed in diamonds and ebony lace.
Her flesh was white as an egret's plume,
And nobody knew from where she'd come.

But she died in the sand with a doll
In her hand—Devil Doll,
And the wind went away with her soul.

She strutted the streets in scarlet shoes,
And where she'd come from nobody knows—
But her hair was black as crow's feather,
And she wore no coat in winter weather.

In the waiting weeds she lies at rest,
And no man near, nor any beast,
But a Devil Doll against her breast.

A demon's look, yet eyes of a child,
She sang as she waked, but never smiled,
And the townsmen stood to watch her pass
From pavement end to river grass,

Where she died in the sand with a doll
In her hand—Devil Doll,
And the wind went away with her soul.

R. H. GRENVILLE

NIGHTMARE

He thought, in his great weariness, to mount
The gentle palfrey of oblivion,
And so be borne, dim miles beyond his count,
Through peaceful country safely to the dawn.
Instead he seized, by evil chance, the snarled
Dark mane of that wild hellion whose back,
Bony and bleak as driftwood, and as gnarled,
Wrenched him with tortures equal to the rack.
Up sweating, straining heights, then, wildly neighing,
Down sickening drops into the foul abyss,
Head echoing mad hoofbeats; groaning, swaying,
He clung to his satanic mount, till this
Fantastic steed jack-knifed in middistress
And tossed him headlong into consciousness.

INTUITION

From shadowy stratas of his mind,
Dim depths beyond the conscious sphere,
Surprising in its urgency,
There rang a sudden bell of fear
And, without thinking, he obeyed—
Swerved blindly to the left, and saw
Death hurtle past him down the grade.
He sat there shaken, filled with awe,
Much less that life was unimpaired,
Still warmly housed in flesh and bone,
Then that the tragedy was spared
By something in him that had known.

GHOST

“You’d be better off dead!” they said,
And that was a cruel lie.
Walking about alone
Under the pitiless sky,
In the spirit’s threadbare coat,
With the heart a persistent cry
And no sound coming out—
Lost in the living eye.

The wistful fingers pluck
At a passing sleeve, pass through
Into fluid air, *are* air.
Only a very few
Will pause now and then, will stare,
Asking of no one there,
“Is it you? Is it you?”

BORDERLINE

At every step he heard the devil's moan,
Saw Hades yawn beneath the paving stone,
And fancied, with dire dread,
A brimstone flavor to his daily bread.

He felt the soul to which he vowed to cling,
A wronged and warred-for thing,
A kind of vague and luminous rugby ball
Tossed between hell's deep pit and heaven's high wall.

His wish to be good was a kind of quenchless thirst,
But life's sly pitfalls, many and accursed,
Left him at last no refuge from the bad
Save to go mad.

AMY GROESBECK

THE BROTHERS

Yep, that's me. Stranger, ain't yew? Wal, step in.
Are you the new clerk up to the Town Hall?

Lookin' up Crowville records? Wall, I guess
yew come to the right place, seein' as how
I've lived here sixty years; me and the town
sorta grew up t'gether. Set down—there.

Nope, I'll smoke m' pipe. What you aim t' know?

The Hoag boys, Ben 'n Ezra? Sure I knowed 'em.
Ain't heered of 'em for more'n forty years;
can't rightly say are they alive or dead.

Yew don't say! *Both*. B' gol, who murdered 'em?

That's just an old joke in these parts. Yew see
even as kids they was so ornery
everyone hated 'em.

Plenty o' reasons.

From the beginnin'? Wall, I'll do m' best,
but Gosh a'mighty, it's a long spell back.
I'll say this for 'em—they never had no chance.
Their Pa—he was no prize—cleared out fer good
soon after Ezra. Their Ma worked some years
doin' odd jobs, then gave up, tuk t' drink;
we kids called her "The Drunk". Ben 'n Ezra
were "on the town" yew might say—lived on handouts
'n what they stole. Wa'n't nothin' left on porches
while they was growin' up. I callate Ben was ten
an' Ezra eight, when the School Board got busy
'n clapped 'em into school. The Ladies' Aid
found 'em some clothes an' cleaned 'em up a mite.
Couldn't do much; reckon the dirt went deeper
'n soap and water'd reach. Wall, you know kids;
guess we was purty mean; we laughed at 'em—
even made up a song—somethin' like

 Your Ma's a drunk,

 You smell like a skunk—

yew know, kid stuff. We didn't sing it long.

What happened was we found it wasn't healthy,
even with them so small. Each time we teased 'em
somethin' bad followed, an' I mean real bad—
the top board of the school steps was loosened
an' several kids was hurt—once the rope
on the yard swing was cut more'n half through
an' Hiram Watkins got his arm broke bad.
They never was caught at it, but we kids knew.
Some of us tried t' beat 'em up one day
But Ben whupped out a jackknife—see that scar?
an' after that we was plumb scairt, I guess,
an' let 'em be. Even the teacher gave up.
They came t' school or not, but mostly came—
I figger that was Ben, he was right smart,
an' Ezra allas done jest what he said—
but no one spoke t' 'em ner they t' no one.
Then came Miss Prince—b'judast now it comes back!

Sorry—guess you'd dream if you'd a seen her.
Florabelle Prince, the new school teacher,
an' purty as her name. Didn't take long
till the hull school began t' call her "Princess"
behin' her back, o' course, she'd stand no nonsense;
we all would'v tuk anythin' she give us
an' begged for more. She liked us nice an' clean,
so every hand an' neck an' ear was red
each day from scrubbin'. But that was nothin'
t' what she done t' them two, Ben 'n Ezra.
Ben was jest past fifteen, scrawny an' short
an' pale—I mind he coughed a lot; but Ezra
was a great strappin' boy, strong as a ox
an' twict as dumb. Wal, you'd not believe it,
we didn't an' we seen it—in one month
or mebbe less, she had those savages

lookin' near human. Dunno where they got it—
(Ben wrote a fair hand which some farmers didn't,
an' Ezra'd work good when he had a mind to)
but somehow they found cash an' bought some clothes
an' had their hair cut. An' then, by cracky,
there was Ezra, a-totin' of her books
with Ben on t'other side, talkin' to her,
makin' her laugh—I tol' yew he was smart.
We older boys was pizen sore, but none
would tangle 'long of Ezra. That went on
that hull durn winter.

Dunno. Mebbe she

thought they needed her more'n the rest of us.
S'pose they did, fer fact. But come Spring term,
that school was buzzin' like a hive o' bees
around a queen—an' jest as dang'rous.
Boys that age, y'know, take lovin' hard.
But somehow we all knowed the worse we had it
was nothin' to what Ben n' Ezra felt.
They even tuk t' glarin' at each other,
them as 'd stuck t'gether like flypaper.
Reckon at last she saw it wa'n't no joke,
fer one day after school she ast Ed White,
the biggest boy in school, t' walk her home.
Y'could 've heerd grass growin' when they left,
an' no one dared look at Ben 'n Ezra.
That night Ed White fell off the old footbridge
an' cracked his skull on them big river boulders;
leastways stones might've messed him up that bad—
an' next day Princess, lookin' kinda peaked,
walked to an' from school between Ben n' Ezra.
Two days later she tol' us she was leavin'.

Yep, she left. I mind somethin' queer about it;
somethin' 'bout a trunk she never sent fer.
All I know is she left so quick she never
even tol' us good-bye. We was so sunk,
nothin' mattered. Prob'ly some teacher came
fer them last weeks—I couldn't rightly say.

Guess they was jest the same. Nope, thinkin' back,
there was a diff'rence. Ben seemed sorta taller
an' Ezra, who'd 've crushed him with one hand,
acted like he was scairt. That's all I know.
I worked that summer over 'n V'mont;
when I come back, October, they was gone.

Fergit it. Dunno how it could've helped,
bein' so fur back. You ain't said *how* they died.

It was? I never see no New York papers.
That's a island, ain't it, in the Harbor?
I seen it on the map.

Wal, I'll be durned!

Sounds purty dang'rous. That burned-out house
might-ve collapsed an' buried 'em alive
down in that cellar.

Yep. Must've been years
pilin' up that much junk. How was they found?

B'judast, that damn' tramp must've been scairt
right plumb t' hell seein' them two bodies!

Chained! Chained t' the *wall!* But Gosh-a-mighty!
if Ben died like you say on that old sofa,

then Ezra—Ezra must've *starved* t' death!
That's worse'n anythin' I ever heerd
in all m' life.

Say, that *is* mighty queer.

Why do you reckon Ben 'd set such store
on a small piece o' blue ribbon? Mebbe it
put him in mind of Florabelle. Her eyes
were blue as blue, an' her face pink an' white
like apple-blossoms. I c'n see her hair—
Gawda' mighty!—

It jest come back t' me—
she *allas* wore a blue bow in her hair!

ROBERT E. HOWARD

THE SANDS OF TIME

Slow sift the sands of Time; the yellowed leaves
Go drifting down an old and bitter wind;
Across the frozen moors the hedges stand
In tattered garments that the frosts have thinned.
A thousand phantoms pluck my ragged sleeve,
Wan ghosts of souls long into darkness thrust.
Their pale lips tell lost dreams I thought mine own,
And old sick longings smite my heart to dust.
I may not even dream of jeweled dawns,
Nor sing with lips that have forgot to laugh.
I fling aside the cloak of Youth and limp,
A withered man upon a broken staff.

EARTH-BORN

By rose and verdant valley
And silence I was born,
My brothers were the mountains,
The purple gods of morn.

My sisters were the whirlwinds
That broke the dreaming plains—
The earth is in my sinews.
The stars are in my veins!

For first upon the molten
White silver sands I lay,
And saw the ocean beckon
With eyes of burning spray.

And up along the mountain,
And down along the lea
I heard my brothers singing,
The river and the tree.

And through the ocean's thunder,
And through the forest's hush
I heard my sisters calling,
The sea-wind and the thrush.

And still all living voices
Leap forth amain and far,
The sunset and the shadow,
The eagle and the star.

From caverns of the ocean
To highest mountain tree
I hear all voices singing
Their kinship unto me.

ALETHA HUMPHREYS

ARACHNIDA, FEMALE

How silent lurks this perfect anarchist—
the wicked widow, with a taste for mates—
octet of nervous, jointed legs, tucked up,
tensed to spring, as gimlet eye impales
the lazy dung-fly buzzing toward his doom.

She-cannibal wastes no golden days
in parleying; no strikes, inflation
threaten belly factory with spinnerets.
She builds her house, a cradle for her eggs,
and weaves this sticky trap for imbeciles.
Murder her way of life who needs no friends,
necessities and progeny assured.

PARTY BID

Witch in every closet;
Attic has a ghost. (Boo!)
Ride a broom and learn your doom;
Jack-o'-Lantern plays the host.

Cat eyes' fire flickers:
Hark! The caterwaul!
Dead men talk and demons walk
At the witches' ball.

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS

KEEP DARKNESS

Outside the lilacs blurred
to deeper purple, and were lost;
a bird
high in the maple quaveringly tossed
his music to the sunset and was still.
What stronghold has the heart
to stand against that chill
moment when twilight falls and swallows dart
blindly under the eaves?
Keep darkness for a while:
there is an eye in darkness which perceives
time on another dial,
but seldom seen,
save when we feel our own
loneliness come between
tomorrow and a world no better known.
In such a mood we'll turn
more gratefully to all the lights that burn
at windows opened even as our tonight,
finding a way to keep
darkness a while familiar to our sight,
before the lilacs fade, before we sleep.

THE YELLOW CAT

I

In towns like ours where fifty years are just
The difference in the fullness of a skirt,
Accumulation of a little dust

On things mere Time is powerless to hurt,
People grow old but memories keep young;
And so Miss Nancy, up on Maple Street,
lived in a kind of shadowland among
Shadows we neighbors could not hope to meet.

Nobody called and yet we often heard
Voices pitched softly and a sound that might
Have been the yellow cat who never purred,
Howling at something darker than the night.
And though the crumbs were scanted year by year
The mice, I think, had nothing much to fear.

II

Cats have a way of watching; they disdain
Affection and are haughty even to those
Who tend the fire and feed them; but a strain
Of something deeper than indifference froze
The blood of that sleek Basilisk who sat
Admonishing Miss Nancy with his eyes.
He was threat, a more-than-common cat,
Older than Egypt, and as Egypt wise.

Wearing a little locket and a bell
That tingled even when he seemed to nod—
Which wasn't long—he cast a kind of spell
Over that hollow house; and, still more odd,
Dogs bristled when they crossed the lawn, as though
Sniffing at danger or a secret foe.

III

Gossip needs flesh and blood to thrive on. What
Good is a ghost? Folk died or moved away,
And Maple Street complacently forgot

That fifty years are really but a day.
So they were strangers who broke down the door
And found Miss Nancy in her walnut bed,
Scraps of torn letters littering the floor,
Stiff as a cornstalk, comfortably dead.

But what was mentioned only by a few
Had the most meaning. On her meager breast
A yellow cat was curled, and when she drew
Her last breath sharply, it was he who pressed
The sunken cheek. At least, they found him there,
Purring . . . But that was nobody's affair.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

A WINTER LEGEND

Men say it was there where Exmoor ends in air
The last of stags to stand at bay
Suddenly turned at the winding of the horn
To a branch-work of frost, then out of it rose
The Parian shape of a naked Artemis
With eyes of more than icicle scorn,
And the crescent that over her brows appeared
Was also a brightness not to be borne.

The hounds in panic howled, their idiot circles
Of leaping fangs and foam enwound
Fetlocks and haunches of upreared
And whinnying horses, whose lantern orbs alone
Outflashed in terror the whites of their masters' eyes;
Riders and ridden and slavering packs around them

Lunged wildly to be free
Of the beauty piercing their mortal marrows through
With looks of immortal injury,
Rocked on the rim in agonizing tumult,
Then plunged into the sea.

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

250 WILLOW LANE

Hollow heads turn toward the picket fence,
pink geranium lawn, bougainvillea
climbing, claiming, cascading down a white,
two-storey side; eyes, soap-opera wet,
seeing the story book girl with the doll in her arms,
grow mistier still; and the fool's mouth says, "How sweet."

This is no "special baby." Not any more.
Why did her father lie? In the children's shop,
she saw another like her, then saw three.

Suburban wives lecture their tomboys; steal
privileges because of misdemeanors,
say soft words, harder than blows of switches:
"Why can't you be like that nice girl down the block?"
Horror's not heard in the houses of correction.

Back of the house by the hidden incinerator,
infanticidal, a torturer spends her rage:
there is a cry, another, and then none
as eyes of death stare in a mad mother's arms;
the flames leap, leap higher touched by laces.

Dinnerless, tomboys go to musicless rooms.

Down the block, dressed in a new pink jumper,
a princess sits, eating her pink ice cream;
then prayers are said by the girl in the long white gown.
Not facing the crematory, the girl turns
for a kiss and the music box, her daddy's gift.
"Angel," he says, and he tiptoes out
as she listens to *Si-lent night, ho-ly night,*
All is calm, all is bright. . . .

BEDTIME TALES

Mother and son
live side by side.
Long long ago
she stretched out wide
her flaring skirt
so he might hide.

Forty years
he has been here
with his one love
always near;
with the small
boy's teacup cheer.

Neighbors read
fairytale lore.
Children, though
they ask for more,
never know
the witch next door.

MR. LERNER

Mr. Lerner had had enough,
and—damn it!—he was not resigned
to what the fools had uttered; he,
unclad, knew that they dressed his mind

when he was told his nudist world
was one fenced acre and no more.
Knowing he was not wholly free,
he broke the stout lock of the door.

Then out in sunny road and street,
blessed all around by heaven's hand
touching him warmly, he was not
surprised he walked above the land.

Behind his bars, he looks at fools
who laugh and taunt. All looking in,
he soon discovers, are quite insane—
each lugging a prison around his skin.

CHILD WIFE

She got her way by shedding tears,
and being hurt in tantrum-years.
As time sped by she cried the more
if he dared pass the shaken door.
One night she heard no steps about:
death and her cad has ventured out.
She went in tears to her childhood place,
and found her doll with its battered face;
and found her bowl and pudding dry:

how dare her first offenders die!
She found that they too long ago
had left her, lost in her pool of woe.
Athirst, she sought her childhood well,
and plunged down dry, dark depths of hell.

WOMAN TELEPHONING

The angry threat of silence, ever present,
rages within her, bestial and held back
only because of fear that all those hated
will find her out before her still attack.

Her plans are monstrous; thinking their destruction,
the voice of silence phones; and every foe,
feeling the pointed fingers of dark distance,
speaks softly and then anger shouts hello!

The phone clicks fear; then hatred's dark receiver
drops in the cradle, while she sees them pace—
the caged wild things; she dials, once more plodding,
while steel-barred distance shields her throat and face.

FLOGGED CHILD

Curled in his fist, though nothing's there,
a knife is being formed.
Here in his house that is a lair
he is becoming armed.

Loathing is forming without sounds
ramrods of hidden heat.

Injury felt reopens wounds;
hurt cannot abate.

Now he is driven to the wall;
now hardened by his hate,
he is the equal foe grown tall:
the enemies beg too late.

SUNDAY EDITION

War screams, so peace becomes a whisper
and less than that in our most blatant pages.
The Golden Wedding tale is lost among the comics,
and page-one murder rages.

Love has no value. Lust is featured,
especially in the costly Sabbath sections,
along with market gains and Senator McNulty,
and various resurrections.

Defended by the movie scribbler,
the cinema's big business, Mimi Jolly,
caught in a love nest, joins the big production
and gets a raise for folly;

this, the big story, lessens
interest in the cheaper girls of passion,
given free board by firm or winking clean-robed justice;
alas, such is the fashion.

As the Sunday lamb's digested
father dozes, son turns from the paper
and humor to his pistols, mom rereads the story
of the housewife and the raper.

WOLF AND TIGER DINING, A. B.

"Scotch over ice?" the Wolf said to the Tiger.

"Or Dry Manhattan?" "Never touch the stuff.

It almost ruined man, you know. I'd rather
take blood. Man almost never took it rough;

"instead he dressed his meat with vile concoction."

"No wonder that he lost all sense of taste,"

the Wolf replied. "To think he cooked the carcass;
he doomed himself to death, with so much waste."

"What will you Wild Beasts have?" the waiter asked them.

"We're almost broke. The Christian meat is tough
(they spoke of grace when they chewed Lamb and Mutton)
but we can eat it if we chew enough."

"Remember that young juicy thing from Kansas?"

"Richer than the svelte rich piece from York."

"Here comes the chunk who ate us Beasts on Sunday."

"Let's open our jaws wide, and get to work!"

SALEMS OF OPPRESSION

The lady took exception to assertions:
the witches burnt in Salem. We took down
the volume, aid of indolence and error.
Yes, we unjustly criticized that town.

Apologies by critics are in order,
for we must give that holy place its due.
They did not burn the citizens of Salem;
they hung them by the necks—not one, not two.

Do not accuse that place of ways inhuman,
of burning! Never these who piled their stones
self-righteously upon their luckless townsman,
who captured heaven as they crushed his bones.

Do not abuse the gentle folk of Salem,
or speak in error of their fiery fray.
Self-righteous ghosts, and not alone in Salem,
they do God's will—but in a devilish way.

OLD MEG OF KITRANN

Old Meg of Kitrann let no one
enter her black, barred door.
Though taken ill she drew no latch,
and cursed the visitor.

In all her dark, forsaken years
no man or woman stepped
across her threshold. Hungry hounds
guarded her while she slept.

When Meg and hounds were dead, they found
a tintype, handsome face;
her husband's grave nearby, and no
bones buried in that place.

PARTY LINE

As one of the curious gatherers
drawn to the death scene
in a city street,

I was held to the spot,
safe behind the curtain of miles,
yet listening there at the locked doors of two lives.
The man was beating the woman with fists of language;
then finally sated,
he was drained of anger;
the sound was a long, repeated, absurd coo.

She, revived, and rising,
rattled the lines with her fury;
the storm gathered and rose,
tore and plunged.

The cradle clicked;
and still I felt the talon striking.
The quiet room became a ruined meadow;
the hare leaped from the frame;
the doe sped into the deeper woodland;
and the place was filled with screeching birds.

NIGHTMARE IN MORGANZA

1

It was there, again:
the stumbling up the dark stair
in the still night, and the light
turned on, and a whispered, "Edward, wait;
the children will hear."

It was there, again:
the old fear,
the old hate.

The boy stood near,
not three dark yards away,
with his eye seeing gloom
and madness
and doom
and his ear leaning against the door.

It was there,
there in his mother's room,
blurred,
that he saw that love like a fierce anger,
heard
strange language of a wild word
unspoken, saw his mother's red hair
swinging, swinging, as arms furred
with a blackness blacker than night
held her
tightly
with a cruel delight,
claiming her, claiming her with a low pride.

His mother!
The beast; the bride.

2

Hands deafened the hearing
of the hot truth.

Hands shut out
the passion, the doubt,
the crime and the night nearing
oblivion for the boy.

A whiteness held
the young face; then a fist felled
the pillow,
while two slept.

Out in the clearing
of the meadow, in the clean place,
the boy crept.

Knowing only day's, not dark's
intrusion,

the frightened larks
warned a slumbering night;
and furry feet ran through the grasses;
feathered ones flew from the still passes,
while the boy,
running
like a crazed colt,
flew and flew and flew, and fell;
then suddenly, with a hard jolt,
he stumbled when rising, and he lay there bleeding.

"Mother!"

No one came.

Only a name
split the air, while the bruised one needing
the balm for a leg, a heart, a spirit,
cried and cried again,
but cried in vain;
for no one,
nothing but a bird in flight
in the darkest night,
could hear it.

Finally, he lay there,
weeping,
weeping;
and the larks, in their turn,
aroused him from his sleeping.

MARTHA KELLER

WILDERNESS ROAD

There's ghosts on the road here,
Ghosts that grieves.
No steps that I knows are
Light at leaves.

Yet it's never the same
As a needle's drop,
But a steadier rain
Of start and stop—

Like it brushed by, low,
Through pines and firs.
See how the dust now
Lifts and stirs.

And look at the dent there,
Heel and toe.
Them feet went bare
Like Indians go.

HERBS AND SIMPLES

What are the simples the witches want?
Vinegar, whiskey, cider wine,
White horse-radish and parsley plant,
Tin and tallow and turpentine.
Nein?

What are the drugs for the devil-spells—

Ague and canker and cholera?

Juniper juices and elder bells,

Arsenic, ipecac, arnica.

Ja?

What are the herbs the hexes need?

What are the deadliest things there are?

Pointy plantain and jimpson weed,

Tar and tobacco and cinnabar.

Nicht wahr?

What the the venoms that must be found?

Lye and vitriol, sugar of lead,

Belladonna and graveyard ground.

What are the words that must be said?

Trotter Head!

Ix, ux, dullix, from lungs and liver

Cast it back on the lying tongues.

Until the Mother of God, the Giver,

Shall be delivered of other sons.

Yet once!

MARY KENNEDY

ONE OF THE SIDHE*

Let her rest,

Winged wild thing

Blown on the storm.

* An earth spirit or fairy of Irish folklore.

Do not fear
Her wide sad eyes,
Her lightning glances.
Have you never heard
Of creatures lost in air
Drawn by a flame?
Watch!
She moves to the fire
Grateful, meek.
Blow on her fingers
Frozen with cold!
If you are gentle
Perhaps she will speak,
If you are kind
She may forget sorrow.
Let her rest now,
She will be gone tomorrow.
When morning comes
She will fade into mist.
Only for this night
Has she need of shelter.
Guard your heart well.
She will try to surprise,
To bewitch, to bind,
To take it with a spell
With an ember and an ash,
For she could be cured
By its strength
Of all she has endured.
Pity will not hold her,
Only love could change her
Into simple woman.
You are not in danger
If she leaves unkissed.

Green in her eyes,
Bronze in her hair,
Do you see the flash
Of fool's fire there?
It is such a light
As lures a man to doom . . .
But you are safe, my darling,
In your little room.

WALTER H. KERR

PRENATAL FANTASY

A firedrake sejant on a field of sard
Awaited, still I lingered for a spell
To hear my fellow demons wish me well;
Too, parting from my hornèd mate was hard;
But fiend or flamen goes where duty calls,
I had no choice, but then I wished to go,
So many unknown things that I would know
And even amaranthine living palls.
I vaulted to the saddle with a flick
Of membraned wing, and Saturn dropped from view.
I shed a teardrop, one or maybe two,
To leave that happy, haunted bailiwick,
Then turned I, with an eager, obscene mirth,
To contemplate my destined human birth.

THE HANGED THING

Gib and gibbet, these shall be my signs
So you will know, my love, that I still roam
A planet that can never be my home,
While dog and vulture desecrate my shrines;
For you will see them, love, with obscene fruit
From heavy limbs adangling black with flies,
Then know a demon lives, where pale man dies,
When nourished by the cursèd gallows root.
And when you see the black gib cross your path
Then shriek, my love, and bar your flimsy door
For I will come as oft I came before
And whispered lies won't turn away my wrath . . .
And tell your hangman lover to beware
The Thing he thought destroyed within his snare.

VAMPIRE

The almost-tropic night crept through my door,
Left open for relief, and I, in sleep
As fitful as a bat's erratic leap
Across a gibbous moon, reversed once more
My tortured efforts in that wrinkled bed
To grasp the secret just beyond my reach
Where Sleep sat like a bloated, scarlet leech
That feeds upon the marrow of the dead.
The night came in my room and with it came
A Thing that never shows itself by day,
And to that torture rack on which I lay
The Thing brought peace . . . and teeth that slash and maim,
Sharp teeth that drink . . . and I fall in a pit
Of blessèd darkness and am glad of it.

TRAP

I built a snare one day and sought to capture
Days where Time was wisps of golden rapture,
Runes of blood by rounded widdershins
Were bounded, waxen moments pierced with pins,
I used them all and some not in the book,
Not one small loophole did I overlook.
My trap was baited well, I used the soul
That priests insist is mine, although I thought
The bargain in my favor, Satan bought
A bridge across the Styx, an empty hole
Where brimstone burned no more—and that was all.
Time walked into my trap and pulled the pin,
The snare was sprung, there was no aperture,
No loophole for escape—and I went in,
And in, and I went in, and I went in . . .
. . . I built a snare one day and sought to capture
Days where Time was, Time was, days where rapture
Pierced with widdershins of blood and brimstone
Bounded, rounded, baited, rounded, bounded,
Bridged across an empty hole, a hole,
No aperture to capture to capture the rapture,
No loophole in the waxen moment,
Styx and stones, just styx and stones, just styx . . .
I used them all, the runes of blood, the rounded,
Bounded, golden rapture captured, bounded,
Captured, trapped, and I went in . . . and in . . .

THE STONE

I was apprenticed as a callow lad
To an old sorcerer of dark repute

But I preferred the midnight Panic flute
And peasant maidens wild and lightly clad;
And I learned little that the night can't add
Although I knew the triple cursed volute
And what to do with screaming Mandrake root.
I must have been more than a little mad
Thus wasting all my time on perfumed verse
To tilt a pretty head to scan for stars
Occulted by some magic words I said,
For now I wither under Chronos' curse
And all I have of glory are the scars,
And not one spell to quicken up the dead.

HERMAN STOWELL KING

EVOCATION

Wizard, from your misty censer, brew
me an elixer from the dark dew
of tombs, I fain would know the crypt
where Chaldean sorcerers sleep

and assuage the tormenting thirst
wrung from the fruit of first
edens—rootlets still writhe in the blood
and I am seed of that cursed brood.

Or, kneeling within the pentagram,
cry mercy of the merciless *I AM*.

VERA BISHOP KONRICK

ERDA

Born of the union of Chaos and Time,
Called from the womb by the Word;
Erda, the luminous, came with a rhyme,
Darkness drew near when he heard.

Her robes were the hue of moon-haunted mist,
Her hair the red-gold of the dawn;
Her flower-strewn mantle was donned for a tryst,
She held future ages in pawn.

Thus came the consecrate mother of men,
Bride of Omniscient Light,
To the bright tree of life fruiting deep in a glen
Where the serpent lay coiled out of sight.

Darkness, her ravisher, sounded the knell
Of doom for the children of rape,
And all the dark sophistries uttered in hell
Could not spare us the reign of the ape!

FRANK BELKNAP LONG

ADJURATION

It has been rumored that there are
Glacial Splendors

In the dark of the moon;
Great winds blowing,
And blue-ice mountains
As resplendent as a child's
Spinning top
In the wonder-world of
The very young,
When every new toy
Has the magic of circus elephants,
Giraffes with a fine gloss,
A ringmaster with jointed limbs
And a Mechano-set.
On Mars, too—and Venus;
Grail-bright splendors,
Lakes Darien-new,
Titan crests
Coiling into foam.
Rejoice then and be bold!
Ride the wild stallions
At the Atom's core.
Be poets, visionaries without guilt!
Has it not been said:
"He who stands
At the precipice's edge
Must have a god's strength,
A god's bold wisdom?"

THE NEW ADAM

On the lowlands where the angular shadows
Blend with blooms of intricate design
A beauty Euclidean hides the veld spore

Of the great beasts, and the attentive ear
Must strain to catch the far-off trumpet roar
Of herds of angry pachyderm, half-maddened
By the devious barbs of hunters eight in line.
On the heights that ancient savagery
Fades to nothingness. The blue alone survives,
Infinite in depth, and there the lives
Of all the space-born create an imagery
Light-year strange . . . there build new hives
For cosmic bees, the honey-gatherers of Eternity.

IT IS NOT ONLY THE DEAD

It is not only the dead
Who walk in graveyards,
Where the mildew
Glow like silver talc,
And the talk is of
Milady's teacups
And Stratford's
White-throated swan.
The unborn walk there too;
The Atom's offspring,
Mongolian idiots,
Tongue-tied mutants,
And wild horsemen
Of the coastal plains,
Clad in the skins
Of animals,
And dismounted to rest
Where the mottled skulls
Cluster thickly.

LILITH LORRAINE

SINCE WE ARE PROPERTY

Before we light the tribal fires again,
Before the planet circles charred and still,
Before we run with wolves who once were men,
Let them come forth who slaved us to their will.

Let them reveal their strategies of doom,
Let them speak boldly in the public place,
Let them count all their victims tomb by tomb,
Nation by nation, race by fissioned race.

Let them boast proudly in the zero hour,
Tuned to the throbbing of the flesh-taut drums,
How we who loved the green earth like a flower,
Crushed it to feed their dark deliriums.

Let them crouch with us round the tribal fire,
Distinct and separate in the fading light,
Let them who dragged us down from cloud and spire—
Let them share with us the eternal night.

NO ESCAPE

If it so happens
that when I die
I shall discover
that this whole terrestrial madhouse
has been a horror story
invented by me,

to escape the boredom
of my older playthings,
shot through with not too subtle
implications
that I, too, was invented
to relieve the boredom
of Someone Else, . . .
it will be no more than I expected.

CASE HISTORY

When all his seas with serpents were aflame
And he was god trapped in his universe,
A dark and shadowed loneliness, whose name
Wavered like plumes above a phantom hearse,

The hearse moved on and six phantasmal steeds,
Pawed the gray emptiness of outer space.
And scattered all his comets and his creeds,
With muted thunder and malignant grace.

His mind constricted to the planet's core,
Dissolved to fire mist and virgin night,
Until upon a sea without a shore,
He stood ungarmented, a naked light,
Alone once more upon the terrible coasts,
And desperately tired of gods and ghosts.

IT MAY BE LIKE THIS

It may be like this at the world's ending
a night like all nights

save for an ice globe splintering,
an ice-beast jungled somewhere in the brain,
or somewhere in space, or just outside the window,
or just—somewhere.
Somewhere more terrifying than geographies,
since it has no need to be anywhere.
A slim wave breaking
on no coast whatever.
While the moon drops like manna
and the stars flow into the mind
and a Carpenter
walking through mushrooms
to be unbirthed in a lost stable
in a grotesque town.

LEGEND OF THE HILLS

The preacher was a strange and lonely man
When to the mountain church he came at last,
And being poor and pastorless, the flock
Accepted him nor asked him of the past.

His clothes were mouldy black and neatly pressed,
His gestures had a touch of courtly grace,
His voice rang queerly through the log-built walls
As though words echoed in a caverned place.

Three years he led them in the ways of truth,
Inspired them when light of faith grew dim,
First at the feast and earliest at the wake,
Deep versed in Holy Writ and sacred hymn.

Then suddenly one day they found him gone,
And no one but the sexton ever knew
How he had read upon an ancient stone
That he had died in sixteen-ninety-two.

ROSA ZAGNONI MARINONI

PAUSE

The armor of Mars
Hangs from a sycamore in the King's courtyard,
Loose scaled and tarnished,
The shepherd, Peace, has broken a hole
Through a wall without eyes
And is hurriedly herding sheep through it,
Lest the wind start blowing
And the old armor resume
Its ghastly rattlings.

ANNE MARX

NIGHTMARE

In a summer cottage
of hollyhocks,
my father killed
the marauding fox.
My supper milk spilled
when the shot rang out

and splintered my world
with doubt.

That thief took chickens
night after night
from the angry farmers
across the road;
yet memory sickens
me at the sight
of father's fingers
dripping red.

No matter how gently
they stroked my head,
that night I hid
my eyes.
Later I drowned
in a crimson dream
until I woke up
with a chilling scream . . .
A fox had towered over a bed
with father in it—dead.

STANLEY MCNAIL

ELSIE'S HOUSE

By rocks and twigs and garter snakes
And a path the quick-toed rabbit takes,
By clumps of moss and a skittering mouse
We find our way to Elsie's house.

The porch is sprinkled with ivy shade
And the morning glories never fade
On the trellis by the window sills
Where a scent of spice and ginger spills.

Happy, she greets us by the gate
In an old blue dress, long out of date,
And smiling, asks us both inside,
Though years have passed since Elsie died.

LOTTIE MAE

Lottie was a skinny child,
Shiny nose and hair gone wild,
Tiny fingers always cold,
Narrow shoulders pinched and old.
Down in the basement by the bin
Lottie let her friends come in,
Talked to them and played her games,
Called them all by funny names.
Grown-ups smiled to hear her play:
"Invite your friends to dine," they'd say—
But blanched and gibbered in their chairs
At what came shambling up the stairs.

THE SECRETS OF CISTERNS

The secrets of cisterns
lie deep, lie deep,
down where the walls
are moist and steep,
where wet things crawl

and shadows creep;
the secrets of cisterns
lie cold and deep.

The clink of a pebble,
far off and small,
or the scrape of a pail
against the wall
are common sounds,
but fear grows tall
at a heavy burden's
soundless fall.

The secrets of cisterns
are old as pain.
They are made of stillness
and prairie rain.
They are heavy with seepage
and slow to drain.
All struggles to find them
are vain, are vain.

THE HOUSE ON MAPLE HILL

The old house waits for no one.
It only seems to wait
Behind the weedy hedges
And flaking iron gate.

The window frame is sightless:
It only seems to stare.
Those are not really voices,
But tricks of summer air.

Yet something always makes us start
As though from sudden chill,
And hold our breath when we pass by
The house on Maple Hill.

THE WITCH

Each day she woke with sullen eyes
And fanned away the circling flies.

She breakfasted and left her lair
With bitch-red mouth and fishworm hair,

A leather packet in her clutch,
An evil poison in her touch.

A jig, a curse, three spiteful words,
And children's eyes were pecked by birds.

One look at Goodie Medford's farm
And all her cattle came to harm.

One wave of that persimmon hand,
And sickness settled on the land.

The Salem folk could stand no more;
They dragged her, screaming, from her door

And hanged her to a shrunken tree.
At first she flopped, and then swung free.

Homeward bound, they cheered and crowed—
Then met her coming down the road.

EDNA MEUDT

PART-TIME TENANT

The city of the dead is zoned.
Here acorns grow only licensed oaks.
The hydrangeas live their leases out,
and power mowers
banished the flowering urns.

A part-time tenant,
I observe the rules
and do not rob the living rodent
or scare the vesper singers.

Love, I like it here
where no one tarries long
save fools who love.

We were the fools.
On circus days we came for lauds,
and picnic afternoons to rest.
And sweet of frosted days we savored here
and listened to the leaves,
and smiling, stepped around the graves
like children wading deep to dark.

I watched while at each brother's place,
you gardened in your loneliness,
grew formal with your father.
You never wondered at my pretended weeding,
or why the sorrel flourished where your mother lay?

I watered her with thank yous
and wept in terror of this time
when I would come alone.

We left our floral tokens—
but what have I for you
who filled our home with flowers
I can no longer bear?
A fallen leaf will do
to plant beneath your graying grass—
and you will know for what I ask.
And He who is lenient with the foolish ones
may see this symbol of the tree
as timber for a cross.

H. S. NEILL

SECOND SIGHT

"Come in an' sit ye down," old Gruda said.
"The porridge pot is deep, come get fed.
Fer *him*" (her voice was low) "it's pipin' hot,
But mark my words, my lass, 'e'll touch it not."

The girl sat, edged and pale. "My Ma, she baked
These scones for you, Mis Gruda, light and flaked . . ."
"You're right, my girl, they're tidy ones and rich."
(She'd heard it whispered, "She's a witch.")

"Pr'aps 'e'll have one before he's through 'is chips . . ."
Old Gruda grinned and licked her moving lips.

The girl backed out the door with care,
Wide-eyed at food before an empty chair.

ALDEN A. NOWLAN

AUNT JANE

Aunt Jane, of whom I dreamed the nights it thundered,
was dead at ninety, buried at a hundred.
We kept her corpse a decade, hid upstairs,
where it ate porridge, slept and said its prayers.
And every night before I went to bed
they took me in to visit with the dead.
Christ Lord if I should die before I wake
I pray thee Lord my body take.

EDITH OGUTSCH

MUSINGS OF AN INSOMNIAC

How many suns have blazed and died within
The infinite universes of my skin?
What empires rose and flourished once and fell,
Unknown to me, within a single cell?
Right now, what microscopic nations clash
Inside me, with each flutter of my lash?
And do these tiny creatures comprehend
Their destiny if my world were to end?

But more than anything else, I'd like to know
What being is this, in which I come and go!

PREMONITION

The warden of the universe who flings
A cloak of darkness on that noisy cage
Where birds of different ancestry engage
In fights for crumbs and senseless bickerings,
Will fail one day (not by an oversight)
To whip away the temporary night.

JENNIE M. PALEN

LEGEND OF RAMAPO MOUNTAIN

I

Threading the dance was one who trod
The satin floor as if on sod;

Whose eyes would ever have the look
Of eyes that mind the maple's crook.

A cedar breeze, all clover-grassed,
Would bend the air before she passed

And laundered radiance rise to bless
Her wheaten hair and lilac dress.

No maid urbane in bridal lace
Measured the maze with surer grace

Than lilac gown and hair of wheat.
Among the mathematical feet

Hers, silver-shod and firefly-lit,
Feathered the air and cherished it.

None knew the lilac lady's name—
Not even he with whom she came,

In kindness offering her a lift
To find the debt his—hers the gift.

Standing in honeysuckle dusk
That atomized the night with musk,

Her silver slippers far too frail
To breast the crested mountain trail,

"I'm going down to the dance," said she.
"At the country club." And so was he.

II

And now, in her slow sweet utterance
He read how dear had been the dance;

Saw regret in her youth-round eye
For an evening done, a long dream by.

Cool, as they drove through dripping dew,
She shivered and borrowed a coat from Hugh.

Where laurel surged up the mountain side,
Frill of froth on the full moontide,

A spruce impaled a pallid star.
"Thanks," she said. "How good you are.

Thanks for the lift. And tell the town
I have fulfilled the lilac gown."

Before his moon-mulled wits came back
She turned away in the tamarack.

The laurel dimmed and the wind stood still,
Leaning awhile against the hill,

And the honeysuckle, for a while,
Stoppered the incense in its vial.

III

Troubled next day by laurel flood
And odd foreboding in the blood

That pulled him back to pine and fir
He remembered the packet lent to her.

Never had man a right more due
To pursue acquaintance, reasoned Hugh.

As laurel cupped the liquid glow
Of sun rolled high on Ramapo

He recognized the tamarack
Where daylight limned a leaning shack.

The mountain woman, worn and wrung,
Seemed between dread and utterance hung.

With faded apron—fingers tight,
Worrying it from left to right—

“There’s no one lives near here” she said.
“But me. And my only girl is dead.”

Then with a new and wild distress,
“She had light hair and a lilac dress.

She loved to dance. Someone in town
She worked for, gave her a cast-off gown,

A lovely, lavender, shining thing . . .
And she was wild as a woodcock’s wing

When she would put it on and go
Roaming the trails of Ramapo . . .

It’s twelve years since we buried her—
In the lilac gown—beneath that fir.”

She pointed. Hugh, abashed and dumb,
Noted a red geranium

Beside a cross upon a mound,
And his coat, folded, on the ground.

CONRAD PENDLETON

DARK HOUSE IN AUTUMN

With back to stars that patch
The leafless sky, I fumble-key
The latch
As if I were about to see
Just what this house has kept for years
Inside, perhaps still darker than my fears.

Before I must unlock the door
To stillness that I almost hear
Tonight—unlock the dark I fear
More than I ever did before—
I bang and bang, and try
To shout
To scare whatever's in there out
But can't throat more
Than just a flyblown why.

One over-shoulder glance behind
For stars I share
With night to give my mind
The bravery to stare
Straight ahead
And turn the key
And dare
The unheard dark inside I dread
To face alone more than I've feared my fear
Of my decay year after year
And zero maggots of eternity.

HYAM PLUTZIK

JIM DESTERLAND

As I was fishing off Pondy Point
Between the tides, the sea so still—
Only a whisper against the boat—
No other sound but the scream of a gull,
I heard the voice you will never hear
Filling the crannies of the air.

The doors swung open, the little doors,
The door, the hatch within the brain,
And like the bellowing of ruin
The surf upon the thousand shores
Swept through me, and the thunder-noise
Of all the waves of all the seas.

The doors swung shut, the little doors,
The door, the hatch within the ear,
And I was fishing off Pondy Pier,
And all was as it was before,
With only the whisper of the swell
Against the boat, and the cry of a gull.

I draw a sight from tree to tree
Crossing this other from knoll to rock,
To mark the place. Into the sea
My line falls with an empty hook,
Yet fools the world. So day and night
I crouch upon the thwarts and wait.

There is a roaring in the skies
The great globes make, and there is the sound
Of all the atoms whirling round
That one can hear if one is wise—
Wiser than most —if one has heard
The doors, the little doors, swing wide.

TOM POOTS

BLACK SPIRIT

I often in the evening meet with birds
or fly around a pre-set lie of bones.
Divinely cool I manage temple sleep
and nudge the grey clairvoyant at her cards.
My divinations hold no prophecy
but breathe the restless omen in the ear,
infest the sortilege of shells, and fly
with Ariel more fathoms high in air.

I sometimes am the dead man met at night
in wild uncharted everglades of mind—
for once within the consciousness of man
I fire fear and leave no peace behind.

DOROTHY QUICK

THE MONSTER

Something slithers on the beach,
More than touch of foam,
A long dark thing that tries to reach
Some new and different home.

Something crawling in the shade,
Impossible to see,
Creature which the devil made
In frantic ecstasy.

Something out of awful space,
Alien to man,
That will keep its wicked face
Long beyond life's span.

HOUSE OF LIFE

The house was lonely, all dark and bare,
Not even the thought of love was there.
She stood alone in the dark with fear
For the night and time were drawing near.

Then moonlight came and there was the sight
Of a different world, so clear, so white;
The silvered ghost of an ancient past
Seemed to be loosed to her eyes at last.

She opened the doors and she passed through
To a well-known garden she hardly knew,
Bright etched in silver which coldly glowed
Where flowers stretched to a pearly road

And cypresses stood tall and straight
As sentinels to the iron gate.
By day the roses gave out perfume
As soft and sweet as sea spray's spume.

But now their aroma was heady wine
That sent tingling music along her spine.
The air was soft as a feathered breast
And a sense of quietude impressed

Itself on her frightened heart. The spell
Of nature's magic served her well,
For she knew now that no empty room
No matter how bare or dark with gloom

Can cage the heart when the wind is free,
And the mind that has known the ecstasy
Which nature gives, that is beauty's own,
Can never be stricken or alone;

For the loveliness of the world can heal
An aching wound with its bright appeal,
And remembrance can be a sword to wield
That will always comfort, save and shield.

The time had come, full well she knew,
But the other knowledge was more true.
She left the garden, the tree's dark shade,
And returned to the dark house, unafraid.

THE FOREST

If he had not taken her to the forest
She would never have known
The deep and terrible stillness
That makes no moan;

Or the green moss so soft to rest on
That other beds seem hard;
And the fire that once burned brightly
Becomes dull ash and charred.

If he had not taken her to the forest
She might have lived her life
As her mother did before her,
A calm, contented wife.

But she has known the forest
And Pan has touched her hand;
So never the warmth of fire,
Or peace to understand.

Always the restless longing
For Pan and the deep, dark wood
And the darker things that wait there
Which cannot be withstood.

UNDERTONE

Deep in the cool, dark wood,
Under green boughs she stood;

No sound of bird was there,
Only the pine-sweet air.

Silence can sometimes be
Full of earth's melody;
Even each voiceless thing
Quietly seems to sing.

Stones are not always mute;
Grass blade and moss and root
Parley with rain and sun,
Join the wind's fanfaron.

Deep in the cool, dark wood,
This was not solitude.
Under green boughs she heard
More than the song of bird!

KATHERINE REEVES

ENIGMA

I heard no sound of wild feet
but something slid softly
through the edge of the twilight thicket.
Was it shadow or fox?

The season was neither autumn
nor winter. Shaken, I stood
to watch the grass grow quiet, the leaves
complete their trembling.

Was it being or dream that hid
in the hushed wood. The paradox
of half-light lay on the deepening air.

When evening was brushed by pelt or wind,
and dusty leaves closed like a shutter
before the night, was it dream
dissembling, or just fox
returning to his lair?

ALASTAIR REID

GHOSTS

Never to see ghosts? Then to be
haunted by what is, only to believe that glass
is for looking through, that rooms too can be empty,
the past past, deeds done,
that sleep, however troubled, is your own.
Do the dead lie down then? Are blind men blind?
Does love rest in the senses? Do lights go out?
And what is that shifting, shifting in the mind?
The wind?

No, they are there. Let your ear be gentle.
At dawn or owl-cry, over doorway and lintel,
theirs are the voices moving night towards morning,
the garden's grief, the river's warning.
Their curious presence in a kiss,
the past quivering in what is,
our words odd-sounding, not our own—
how can we think we sleep alone?

What do they have to tell? If we can hear them,
their voices are denials of all dying,
faint, like a lost bell-tone, lying
beyond sound or belief, in the oblique
reach of the sense through layers of recognition . . .
Ghost by my desk, speak, speak.

LIBORIA E. ROMANO

ALL SOULS

When gourds are mellow-yellow on the vine,
when mums and asters wither in the weeds,
when death rides heedless in the dewfrost night,
Madonna, shield me as I say my beads.

When serpents slither through the slushy meads,
when sin pervades the caverns void of light,
when death directs her melancholy notes,
O blessed Lady, mantle me from fright.

When nature waits the nestling robe of white,
when Satan stokes the furnace fiery-red,
when ghostlike shadows shroud the moon in gray,
O Holy Lady, mantle me from dread.

When autumn fields with films of frost lie dead,
when mums and asters wither in the weeds,
when death rides heedless in the dewfrost night,
Madonna, shield me as I say my beads.

RAYMOND ROSELIEP

VENDOR

On the New York Central from Chicago to South Bend
I saw him—at first from the back—and mistook him for
the conductor. His uniform was weary and dark,
his railroad cap might have come off the ark, and his shirt
collar was officially white under the stone grey.

On his tin tray he carried among the gimmicks some
cracker jack & tomato juice (and I had to wince
after cataloging them in files of Innocence
& Experience). He rattled up and down the aisle
of our coach a mystical 7 times—I counted.

Of his visagē children were aferd, very few
asking their mothers for a dime or two. Flesh sagging
from the bonework of his face and neck was the color
of frost bitten corn, his eyes had unhappy people
in them, and his drained lips crackled. The hands I had seen
before, on Halloween or in a home doctor-book
a boy will sneak through. He was hunched, rickety. And true.
(Little use to bury my head in Wolfe's epic of
the Angel—I strayed away from that confessional,
unable to put my ear by the stick crossed window
and help a man/boy say his fable.) The vendor held
me: I could feel him as a poem or candle-end.
So I was rather glad when we pulled into South Bend.

That night I took a cold shower and tried to send him
down the drain. I had enough ghosts of my own for bed-
fellows anyway, and would prefer sleeping with *them*.

But I didn't. I kept buying cans of tomato
 juice which I poured into half filled waterpots of gin,
 telling him a half truth about my fountain of youth.
 When he wouldn't even wet his dryleaf mouth, I bought
 a hundred boxes of his cracker jack, and I strung
 the sticky kernels on christmas cord, crunching them tight.
 Round his neck I looped the noose, and hung him on a hook
 in the skyblue ceiling of the 7th coach where kids
 were whispering their innocent transgressions into
 the latticed ear of a priest, who never seemed to care
 what else was toppling in their parish. Then I cried out
 to them with a loud voice, and they came wide eyed and stared.
 Before I died, I dangled till my skin burned to husk.
 The grinning bones were left uncoffined. In single file
 those children passed, the vendor leading them up the aisle.

PROFESSOR NOCTURNAL

Now Air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd Bat,
 With short shrill Shriek flits by on leathern Wing. . . .
Collins, *Ode to Evening*

Dismissing bees and bookmen from
The Grumbling Hive,
 he pads in April dusk, afraid
 to be alive.

He cannot weather crew-cut flings
 at gaiety,
 but only nod, unlatch a smile,
 and grieve that he

(who all his students claim is wise
as Solomon)
should dread the silly hiding of
the aging sun.

Near bat-time, to the safe indoors,
where lamb chops warm,
he hurries from his boyhood spectres
of alarm.

Brandied and lounged, he slackens fear
at pages numb
with Congreve jabs—till midnight-
punctual, THEY come.

Bats loop from Collins' evening ode
on the calm shelf,
rip the planks his brier smoked
about a self;

slosh the floating
freckles pale,
whimper for blood,
lift hair to nail;

snap, dive,
icicle bone
and the pump
in the chest zone;

squeak warnings of
a gloomier hole
than terra firma
to his soul.

Bed will be bitter,
tangly, damp,
small solace wick
his all-night lamp.

He bargains the Lord
his soul to keep.
But what if he start
eternal sleep,

caught at last
in a web of wing,
bit, sucked
by a blacker Thing?

BLACK ARE THE STARS

Untiring shade, and ghost of dazzling gloom,
blackening again the stars on pane and sill,
nudging the sleepless sleeper in his room:

he fears your lungbeats on his mind and will
while he is busy with an older sport.
Begone, dark luminary (oh bright still).

Remembered calls, which slimed his flesh, contort
the stomach muscle, squeeze the gall of bile,
draw up the groin until the breath comes short.

Now what volcano smolders in your smile,
and spits a windy fire into his blood
that veins must crackle mile on leaping mile?

The bed he twists and jerks is twice his rood.
Depart, before the higher stars are split
by hand: upon a last inquietude.

He wrestles with an older ghost of guilt.

WHERE ROOTS TANGLE

Where roots tangle the ground before their plunge
under, he hooks his heels. His backbone rests
keenly against the oak as the sun sets,
making his faded sweater more like orange.
His face reaches for chinks of light between
the leaves so he can time the moment day
is an equation with his fires that die,
and substitute a colder twig of moon.

The boy of love is moping while that hill
becomes a shadowgraph. But he must turn
from his esthetic distances almost
as sharply as he taught them to his will
once he discovers roots lead down and burn.
And he will mark the night, this light-heeled ghost.

IN TIME OF DARKNESS

At last you do not find—you have—the dark.
No reason, then, to be a child and cry
or be a man of soul intact and pray
when God is busy with some other work.

No wisdom either that you ask the throat
why in a wink of restlessness it moaned.
To pad the ear against the triple round
of spikes may nullify the Absolute.

Your eye no longer courts a scheme to clothe
the nakedness of night with any garb;
now you can lie there, stripped, and not perturb
the sleep of darkness: consummated *truth*.

But if you tempt your beauty to awake,
you meet the mind which tugs a frightened will
while all of heaven waits, and all of hell.
The man who grieves for God must never break.

THE SCISSORS GRINDER

The scissors grinder belled the street
of our moping town,
and in me somersaults of dread
cramped upside down.

My mother used to coax me out
with our sluggish ware;
he singed me by his bristly touch
and razored glare.

Plying hand and eye, he ground
—my flesh was on that stone:
as he cut, the jagged sparks
seared the bone;

and at my feet in fiery pools
splinters winced and bled.
But when he iced my palms with steel
I fled, I fled.

I know I shall remember
until the night I die
the grindstone of a hairy hand,
the blade of an eye.

ALAN

Autumn, my Alan, is a spectre
and you are wan—is your truelove well?

The nightbreath I fear me summoned her
when it sang greatly through our windmill.

Why do your nerve ends prickle your sleeve
now the branches are crossing like bone?

Father, I fancy my five wits thrive
on the wind singing down the wellstone.

Where is your truelove sleeping, my son,
and how will you bury your sorrow?

At the windmill, Father, when I've drawn
the water, question me tomorrow.

GI

war is done mother
& I have come back
& not quite intact
what does it matter

make my bed soon make
it softly linen
with down & as fine
as a snow unpacked

leave a small candle
to baffle the dark
with the italics
of stars on my sill

the red mouth dries hard
& the loins lie black
& this is a pic
ture I have hoarded

in the odd winter
boyhood in the ice
of my burning eyes
make my bed mother

TOUR. IN RAIN

No weather can unbrother brothers. Rain
was putting signature on street and town.
Over the route that waves us otherwise
apart I came to you, drawn by the late

rain. My eyes called out and were answered:
the wet cement cried back your body inch
by inch, distorted in the sickly yel-
low flow of lamps on corners like a faith;
and I was quick to feel the terrible
unholding of you manhood in an hour
or night which gave the emptiness its power.
I wept, not as a man weeps for what is lost,
rather for what is hardly found on the
dull and sudden ground.

I followed, and
imagined fallow land, the desert place
you said you would not die in, or the dry
white wine a priest will trickle on his fast.
But you were given to the rain that night
and could not hear a footstep crackle sharp
as Mass wheat and yet falling on your street.

LARRY RUBIN

SYNCHRONIZED

The obituary columns of our paper
Stand like double pillars underneath
The weather map, slyly juxtaposing
Silence and meteorology. Quite
Heedless of propriety, the forecasts
Are not always funereal. Though sometimes
Mournfully shaded areas of rain
Commiserate the heart of grief, as like

As not sunshine will indecorously
Bathe the entire continent. On such
O day, death carries no umbrella.

There is, however, a subtle correlation
In relentlessness: above the daily
Caravan of biers, plodding in file,
The steady march of highs and lows keeps pace.
Ceaseless, the fronts swing eastward in the vanguard
Of the sun, rotating in blind unison
With the cold and settled of the earth.

FOR A POETRY READING TO WHICH NO ONE CAME

It was a falling castle, full of drafts
And echoes, rusty curtains shivering
Where the arras melted darkly to
The wall. The candles were a clutch
At coziness, but the shadows they cast
Were gaunt and old. And there we sat, upon
The deserted dais, a flickering ancient
Loneliness on our lips, reading the words
We had dredged out of our hearts on some
Forgotten parapet in time. Did ghosts
For torment feign applause, or did the wind
Gauge the distance to the dais and groan
Against the hinges of our swollen tongues?
There was a sound, as if a frozen moat
Had started seeping into catacombs
Sealed until that hour. And still we read,
Facing the ghosts like prophecy, until
The whispers ceased, and all the candles
Burned like saints, accepting apotheosis.

THE DRUGGIST

He came to me last night, as if there had never
Been a box. Routine, no tales of Hell
To tell, he worked on an old prescription, and I
Watched, as I used to when I was a boy, and stifled
My eyes, and from the corner of his eye
He saw me and asked why. But all that dirt,
I said, how did you get up
Past all that dirt? I
Can pull pegs out with my teeth,
He said, and went on working.
Later, just before the third cock,
He handed me the jar. Son, he said,
I want you to deliver this before
You go. Is that all, I said, mustn't I
Avenge your death so you can rest? Just
Deliver that medicine, he said, and it was dawn
And of course he was gone. And I knew
That being sealed up like that had turned his wits,
Because I saw he had made the label out
To me.

SYDNEY KING RUSSELL

NIGHT PERIL

One came in
And one went out—
I heard time hold
His breath in doubt.

One came in
With muffled tread
And one went out
Where danger led.

I heard the closing
Of a door,
A sigh, a gasp
And nothing more.

One went out
And one came in—
I heard the wheel
Of fortune spin

And caught the owl's
Implicit warning
Of treachery
And death at morning.

WARNING

This is the haunted wood, where no man goes
In search of solitude
Nor threads his way
In careless mood
At dusk, nor in the burning light of day.
Each shuddering breeze that blows
Across the treetops, carries far and near
The sound of music dissonant and dark
That silences the lark
And strangely terrifies the listening ear.

At night when stillness fell
I have heard voices crying from the trees
In anguish far too deep,
Too terrible to tell,
And I have fallen on my knees
Too desolate to weep
And prayed until at last I fell asleep.

Go not too near, not even in disguise
If you be wise.
Be wary as the fawn
And shun the haunted wood,
Lest you be drawn
Into the very labyrinth of doom
Where demons spawn,
Where dark shapes rise at midnight
From the tomb,
From which, ensnared as by an evil spell
No man returns,
Once having said farewell.

THE SHAPE OF FEAR

He never knew what made him feel so sure
That someone else was lurking in the room
When nothing stirred and he was quite alone.
He sensed a presence unidentified,
An entity he felt and could not name.
The room was full of whispers and the night
Was cloaked in mystery. Sometimes he slept
An hour or two, but always when he woke
It was as if two eyes were watching him,
Watching and waiting endlessly—but why?

He shivered, and went reaching for the switch,—
 The room was filled with light and nothing more.
 Table and chair and bookcase, long familiar
 And family pictures solemn on the wall.
 Nothing beside—except the shape of fear.
 He poured himself a drink and sat awhile;
 “What’s wrong?” he thought. “I must be cracking up,
 Perhaps I’m heading for a nervous breakdown.”
 He held the glass and saw his hand was shaking;
 “Ridiculous,” he said and forced a laugh.
 He read a chapter, put the book aside
 And took a pill. The light went out again.

As if a hand had shaken him awake
 He came to slow and painful consciousness
 And cried aloud, for then at last he knew—
 He felt IT coming closer, drawing near
 And closed his eyes, but could not shut away
 A presence strong and irresistible.
 “It wants me,” was his thought. His senses swam,—
 The room dissolved and left him lying there.

They found him in the morning, and his face
 Was calm and peaceful. Strangers envied him
 And never guessed that he had lived with torment,
 With silence and the ticking of the clock,
 With loneliness and with the shape of fear.

FORECAST

Drop a stitch, drop a stitch,
 Mary Magee,
 So says the wicked witch,
 Stirring her tea.

Drop a stitch, lose your man
While the moon shimmers—
So says the witch whose plan
Balefully simmers.

Tea leaves will tell your fate,
Says the witch, rocking—
Drop a stitch. While you wait
Death will come knocking.

SIX SILVER HANDLES

When winter closed upon the countryside
The widow Mary Murtrie crossed herself,
Felt in her bones she had not long to live.
The dead of winter was a fearful time
For those marooned so many miles from town;
Only a year before, her sister Martha
Had fallen in the snow and quickly died,
And since a coffin suited to her use
Was not available in proper time
They buried Martha in a box of pine.
So Mary, let alone, made up her mind
To have a coffin ready for herself
If Death should call her unexpectedly.
Now in her living room her treasure rested,
The coffin of her choice, with silver handles
Shiny and sleek, and dignified as well;
So every night and morning she would sit
Surveying it in silent admiration.
No box of pine would carry her to rest—
The sight before her offered reassurance.
One day she thought to try it on for size

And climbing in, lay quiet for a spell;
And there she fell asleep and lay till morning,
Waking as children will to new delight.
Six shiny handles worthy of a queen,
A dark wood fine as any she could know,—
This was her pride, her treasure to enjoy;
What more, she thought, could any woman ask?
She often laughed in quiet exultation,
Indifferent to days that passed her by.

She lived another season. When they came
To take her to a final resting place
The coffin was an empty luxury,
For Mary had incredibly outgrown
The space that waited her. Obesity
Defeated all her plans, and this is why
With no precise instructions they might follow
Men took the easiest and quickest course
And laid her gently in a box of pine
Where she lies sleeping, close to sister Martha.

PERENNIAL MOURNER

I saw him at a funeral in town
Absorbed in listening to the obsequies,
Watching the mourners, strolling up and down,
Squinting at sudden sunlight through the trees.
The service over, he was at my side—
“Your pardon. Are you going back my way?
I’m stranded. Could I ask you for a ride?”
“Get in,” I told him, wondering what to say.

"Three funerals this week." His voice was proud,
"And each one more impressive than the last."
I stared at him. Unrecognized, he bowed
And tipped his hat politely as he passed.
"A friend of the deceased?"—He shook his head:
"The flowers were beautiful today," he said.

SPECTRE

I crept through the house like a ghost
Unsought, unseen,
Hearing the tick of the clock,
The creak of the stair,
Alone with the past and its storied secrets,
Alone with shell and shadow.
The ancient mirror, edged in gilt,
Betrayed me,
Denying my reflection.
No face returned my stare,
No peering eyes, no startled hair,
No shape
But emptiness.

Night was a dream, the house a dream
And I—?
Was I an echo from a dateless past
Lost in endless corridors of time?
No answer fell,
No word of reassurance.
A dog howled faintly and a distant bell

Gave sudden warning
And was still again.
I slipped through the house like a ghost
Unmourned, bereft
And silence unbidden
Sang my requiem.

ANTONIA Y. SCHWAB

DANSE MACABRE

I see her dancing in the square
At dusk beside the closed bazaars;
Her veils twirl round while jasmine scent
Pervades the breeze beneath the stars.
She moves now past a trellised stair
As I in strange bewilderment
Watch glimmering feet and follow after
On paths lit by a sickle moon.
Her veils are flowing languorously
As she bends down by a lagoon
Where lotus flowers gleam—I follow
And then I hear derisive laughter—
She drops her mask—I turn to see
A face, a skull—with gaunt eyes hollow. . .

WALTER SHEDLOFSKY

PROPHECY

She dreamed death came to her one day in May,
When ecstasy of Spring diffused the air.
Death came to her, smiling, debonair,
In secret rendezvous above the bay.
Death laughed and chided her with words of clay,
Then, doll-like, threw her from the topmost stair
To rocks below. In dream, she saw death's glare—
One eye was blue, the other brownish-gray.

"A silly dream," she laughed, "no one has such eyes."
Then, on that cloud-filled Christmas day,
She rushed to meet her sister's latest swain.
He smiled and kissed her hand, to her surprise.
Then, as he laughed, she felt a chilling pain—
One eye was blue, the other brownish-gray.

HOUSE OF YESTERDAY

This house I know—though never seen before—
Each shadowed gray stone, by the moon outlined,
A half-remembered dream recalls to mind.
The jutting eaves, the boarded panes, the door,
The twisted oak, the garden white with hoar,
Bring back a yesterday, dimly defined,
Half-real, imagined, with thoughts that bind,
Of some elusive past I knew of yore.

And as I touched the door which opens wide,
And enter each familiar room and hall,
I live again the anguish and the strife,
The poignant hours of some departed life.
I heed a strange and voiceless call,
And find the room . . . where long ago . . . I died.

RUTH FORBES SHERRY

WALTZ

He wooed me sweet and he wooed me strong
till my lips were a flame and my heart was a song,
as we waltzed over tree and bog along
the steep dark path to the river.

Then my lad from a far land spoke to me low:
I have married a bride in a foreign land,
and she claims my heart and she claims my hand
and I must return, return tonight to Ravenna.

Orion flared and the Pleiades beamed
and the dagger I held to his shoulder gleamed
as we waltzed down that stair, that terrible stair
pirouetting and whirling, we waltzed down that stair to the river.

Waltzing we plunged to the whirlpool's deep.
We routed the drowned from their phantom sleep,
and never and never and never again
shall I waltz with my lad, my beautiful lad from Ravenna.

And never again shall I lie with my love,
but I clasped his soul in my arms as I dove
through weedy reed and the souls of the dead
and the cold fish darting about my head

as I routed the dead from their cavernous bed.
I had murdered my love, my beautiful lad
and never he'll see his foreign land
or lie with his bride in Ravenna.

JON SILKIN

DEEPLY GONE

And dragging their shining skins
Across the beach of straddling sands and sea wrack
Scores of them on the high moon night
Came out of the sea

The black sea, with black skins,
Across the silent beach. And from each skin
A naked one diffused with my sight
Their silver flesh.

Scores of them silently
Coming from the dripping sea. The seals singing,
Incanting, and each one a naked one
A silver naked one.

And among them as I watched
Behind a lusting fat old bush, a girl
Slim as chromium, precious as sight,
Stepped from her seal's

Form and her seal's song. And
The old bush shook and I shook watching her
While the moon watched us all. And as soon
As she came near to me

I leapt out at her: I leapt out.
And "You're mine" I said. "Mine". She laughed, she struggled
While I held to her. "Mine" I said with
Chromium in my mouth

And silver in my eyes. "Let me"
She said "Let me go back to the sea. Once". And
I laughed. "Not me" I said
"Once gone, gone" I said.

And I carried her back
Through the silent cobbled town and away from the shaking
Bush and the seal skins and
The seals' songs. I hardly

Could wait, carrying her,
I could hardly wait. I just ran back
With her laughing like silver in my eyes
And her words running

Through my ears like lust,
The moon raking the fire in me. And she laughed
As I brought her home. "I'll never stay"
She said "Never stay".

"Tomorrow I'll be back.
Tomorrow I'll be back with the seals and the sea.
I won't be here tomorrow and I won't stay.
I'll be gone."

"Back with the seals and the singing,
Back to the sea and the swing of the sea and the edge
Of the black shining world. You'll see."
She said.

"Will I", I said. "We'll see."
And she laughed. But she never saw
Where I hid her skin. "Marry me"
I said, holding her skin, "Marry me".

And I laughed. "Marry me," I said.
"You'll never find your skin, your seals, your sea.
"Marry me," I said. "Forget the black
Shining edge of the world"

"And the shaking fat old bush.
Marry me." And she did. And I laughed. And I laughed.
And I laughed louder than anyone, I laughed
Louder than her sighing.

Louder than the bells' cries and
The wind's cries, louder than my heart beating.
And we married and we married again in my bed
And I laughed.

"You'll see," I said,
Hiding her skin in a different place at the time
Of the full high moon at the time
Of the yearning bell

The seas' bell and the seals'
Bell. "You'll stay here till we die" I said, hiding
Her seal's skin. "You're with child as well."
And she bore me

Three wide-eyed boys
Without seal's skins, and without seal's song. And I laughed
"You'll stay here till we die,"
I said.

And I laughed. "Never mind,"
I said, hiding her skin.

I put it under the stone of the fifth rock
The night I laughed like storm. The town shook

And the bells shook and I shook
But "Where's my skin?" she said. Under the fifth rock, I thought.

But you'll never see that, I thought. Never that.
And I went to the fifth rock just to make sure

At the time of the high moon and quivering fat old bush
To make sure, I thought. Just to make sure.

I went to the fifth rock just to make sure. I tell you
It was gone. "It's gone," I shouted,

"At the time of the high moon and the seals' song,
The black shining edge of the world and the seas' song."

"It's gone," I said. "It's gone" I shouted "It's gone."
And I ran past the world and the shining black edge, I ran

Past the five rocks at the time of the high full moon
With her skin gone. Her gone. "Her gone. Gone." I cried.

"I was very happy," her note ran.
But I'll never see you again, I thought.

LOUIS SIMPSON

THE LOVER'S GHOST

I fear the headless man
Whose military scars
Proclaim his merit.
And yet I fear a woman
More than the ghost of Mars,
A wounded spirit.

That look, all kindness lost,
Cold hands, as cold as stone,
A wanton gesture—
"What do you want, old ghost?
How long must I atone?"
So I addressed her.

"Did you not call?" she said,
"Goodbye, then! For I go
Where I am wanted."
Till dawn I tossed in bed
Wishing that I could know
Who else she haunted.

JOCELYN MACY SLOAN

STRANGER BRIDE

The creature was a changeling child—
only a fool would woo her.
Though neighbors cautioned him, beguiled,
the love-lorn man pursued her.

And still she fled him, milkweed-light
with thistled laughter. When they were wed
he shrank beside her through each night,
fearing the stranger in his bed,

dreading a tap upon the pane,
an eager footstep on the stair.
One night of gentle April rain
he strangled her with her golden hair.

AND THE PEAR TREES SHIVER

Peacocks scream and the pear trees quiver
dropping their petals on seeing her pass
over the terrace. Down to the river,
eager feet skimming through violet-sewn grass
with primroses gay, she goes to her lover.
Love will return—our love is forever

She has not learned, for she is not clever.
In a silvery face, moth-wistful green eyes
adoring, bewitched, still search for him. Never

was woman so faithful. Each spring as she lies,
streaming hair palely lapped by the river,
peacocks mourn and the pear trees shiver.

THE INVADERS

Discouragement's mold, the first cobweb of despair
must have started years ago, and a dead stare
impaled him still. The studious young man,
enraged by quiet forces, somehow implacable forces
poaching on solitude, thought, It's my place now.
This is my time, my turn. Now they belong
in whatever's their heaven or hell, while I figure my own.

Shadows conjoined more densely with deepening summer,
moved through the house, jostled upon a lawn
he left to the tenure of dandelions and daisies;
fatigued, he slept a great deal. Inertia's vine
sealing eyes that drowsed above work, finally prisoned a min
at peace with his friends the invaders. The scholar yawned,
shut his books with decision. *Summer's the lotus season,*
not propitious for study. Neither was fall.

One midnight, while fighting a dream, he watched the door open,
saw in the moonless room, a small boy's form—
scarcely more than a swirl of dust—fearfully gazing
over one presumable shoulder, heard his visitor call,
"Go. For you'll find that they are stronger than we are.
Leave while you can!" The lad fled. As silent alarm
ripped through the house, the young man listened, waiting
for invaders to swarm in pursuit up the hall.

CLARK ASHTON SMITH

TO THE DAEMON SUBLIMITY

I wane and weary: come, thou swifter One,
With vans of ether-sundering instancy,
Zoned with essential night and sovereignty
Of flame septuple, strong to blind or stun
Beyond the bolted levin. Though Earth, undone,
Fail to thy meteor-fraught epiphany,
Though Time be as a chasm-riven sea,
Come thou, and bear me to thy chosen sun.

Yes, in the fiery fastness of the star
That thine empyreal wings must often find,
Thy lordliest eyrie, lone in gulf and gloom,
Leave me and lose me, safe from wasting war
Of finite things unworthy and resigned
To some apotheosis of bright doom.

THE INCUBUS OF TIME

Ill days and dolorous nights and years accurst—
The increase of evil, that is twin to life;
Weariness of reanimated strife,
And love, renewing with the selfsame thirst
The same delight—a drunken Tantalus;
And the thousand-chorded monotones of pain
Irresolubly played and played and played again
On broken souls and bodies ruinous.

I would the world and all its leaden woe,
Is ennui, like incumbent tombs of stone,
And time's each minute, as an iron clod,
Were bound about the monstrous throat of God,
And He were drawn in deathless overthrow
To some blind nadir of the voids unknown.

METAPHOR

You are the stately sunset,
Departing with a hundred flames of amber
Beyond the pinnacles of autumn pine
And the low mountains
That bear the brief and vast Olympus of the clouds
Under a purpling zenith.
You are the stately sunset,
And after you,
Silence will rear the moon-eclipsing night,
And a few spectral stars will gather
Like wisps to lead the wandering gods astray
Into the black and boundless fen of all the gulfs.

MEMORIAL

Thy mouth, whereof the worm was amorous,
Thy brows, whereon some waning moon had power,
Thy breasts, corruptible as any flower,
And all thy troubled beauty tremulous—

These, these my careful love hath laid away,
And in the tomb its marble dreams have made,
Thou, sleepest, by no dawn or noon betrayed
To the cold light of time's corrosive day.

Yes, till my brain and all the dreams thereof,
 And mournful memories, are bitter mould,
 Thou liest, lovelier with death and love

Than any queen ensepulchred of old,
 Whose balmy cerements, with a soft perfume,
 Make sweet for aye the mausolean gloom.

AMOR AETERNALIS

O love, thou Judas of the martyred soul!
 Thou pandar to the painted harlot, Life!
 The rankest lies with which thy heart is rife
 Too fulsomely illumine thy lips' red scroll,
 Whereon is writ the secret of our dole,
 Of mortal woes immortalized by thee,
 And wisdom, through thine olden perfidy,
 Drawn back to life from some Lethean shoal.

Away! I know the weariness and fever—
 Kisses compounded of the world's old dust
 With fire that feeds the seventh hell for ever!
 The grave shall keep a gentler couch than thine,
 Though round my heart the roots of nettles twine,
 Wreathed in the ancient attitude of lust.

THE HOROLOGE

O clock, your long and solemn tones,
 That now resound the knell of time,
 Are like some hammer's iron chime
 That rings on broken tombs and thrones.

VINCENT STARRETT

FEMME FATALE

At first I hoped she would accept a dime
And go away. She had been there for days;
For years perhaps. Her prehistoric gaze
Stirred memories that made me one with time.
She had been handsome once, the blue-eyed hag,
But now she looked a very cauldron witch
Mouthing her double-talk; in spite of which
I rather cottoned to the ancient bag.

She was absurd, of course, a little weird,
But dashing too; I liked the way she wore
The thing she called her hat, and even more
The easy way she took my arm, and leered,
And said she always liked a thoroughbred. . . .
Her name was *Annie Domino*, she said.

ROMANTIC EPISODE

"Zut!" cried the Princess, with a breezy smile.
"Who told you I was hard to meet, and why?"
And then she threw a leg across the stile
And said she liked the color of my tie.
We watched a cloudbank slowly drifting by,
And plucked a daisy naked as a pin. . . .
Her home, she said, was just a little spin,
And asked me there to lunch; but I was shy.

At length she turned into a beast of prey,
 And then into a frog, and then a deer,
 And then a bird, and said if she were kissed
 Nine times in thirty seconds she could stay
 A princess for the balance of the year. . . .
 I grabbed at her, but—damn it all!—I missed.

THE DEATH OF SANTA CLAUS

It was the night before the famous day
 When that befell of which I write. The house
 Was silent as the dark: nor man nor mouse
 Stirred anywhere. The weary children lay
 Asleep upstairs; their stockings, after play,
 Were hung beside the fire, with Mama's blouse;
 While, meditating on the morrow's grouse,
 I must have drowsed my errant wits away.

At any rate, I had a curious dream
 In which a little whiskered gnome in red
 Came down the chimney with a set of Tennyson,
 And perished in the flames. One tiny scream
 And he was gone like wax or melted lead. . . .
 But for some weeks thereafter we had venison.

FELIX STEFANILE

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

The cricket in the garden is awake,
 and working at his music with such might

I marvel at the muscle it must take
to carry to the corners of the night.

A function of his legs against his wings,
some such enchantment, or so I have read,
it isn't song, but a pure sound that stings
the softness that had settled round my head.

I think he started when the great moth stirred,
and owls loosed their rallies on the air.
As if theirs was a signal to be heard
his answer now is thrumming everywhere:

leaves in a cunning wind, and the slow croak
of frogs in their frog places, and the thin,
sure caution of the fieldmouse and the hawk,
all make me wonder that, in such a din

Life sleeps at all, or any kind of dream,
to this shrill music, like a march of knives,
as seven thousand races scream and scheme
to get away with seven thousand lives.

PRAYING MANTIS

Pert paradox, whose green and summer claws
reflect an attitude akin to prayer;
artfully scythed to sweep the gasping spouse
young to your breast, while his feet thrash the air
in frantic waltz, and his flesh fills your feast,
Nomenclature's grim humor suits you least.
Grass Widow, for your prey there is no prayer.

Monsters of childhood glimmer on your face,
amaze the singing meadow. Robots stalk
near rose and garden-hedge, by Queen-Anne's lace,
tumbling the startled locust to his shroud:
inert, before your pious preacher's walk,
slackly, he kneels. You pray. His scream is loud.

VAMPIRE BRIDE

A dream of dolorous women stole my sleep,
and when I woke I wept to know them lost:
I'd dreamed of Jezebel, and her hard leap;
of Lilith, and her lullabies of lust.

I mourned for that Medusa of cold fame
whose hair, so strictly curled, hissed on the wind
to seem a fire calling out my name;
I thought of all fond women who had sinned.

I thought of the one garden of the world,
where Eva, early hampered by her snake,
tripped on the fruit by Heaven's wisdom hurled
in Eden's path that pointed to heartbreak.

She lightly stepped before she knew the pain,
and then eumenidean winds and shrieks
called out her crime, the spot where she had lain.
Amazed, she watched the lightning on the peaks

write doom in Hebrew letters on the sky.
their taut intent stiletto to her sight.
Oh how that vision pierced! and the great lie
of day that died to straggling smokes of night.

Even so, dear empress of my blood and bane,
you watch at dawn how tired and how pale
I sink from you. You hide the sudden stain
my face makes in the sun, you draw the veil

all darkness wore the evening that we wed
before a bell, a drum, and a silver horn
presaged our prison, our love's coffin-bed
wherein we riot, until day—stillborn—

arrives to keep me from my midnight wife,
a freak of ashes, gray, and without life.

THAT FAMILIAR STRANGER

The morning's work went quickly done:
for luncheon I felt easy,
so in the park I took the sun,
but my sins they made me dizzy.

I set the paper on my knees:
the squirrels watched my reading,
and all the news that came to me
were informations of bleeding.

I turned away to watch the birds
when, like secret voices,
the leaves slipped down with hurried words,
the street made noises,

and a stranger with a stare of brass
and a cane for walking,
and a cape, and a way of watching me pass,
and a smile of stalking,

asked in the park of the officer,
in a manner chill and neat,
my name, my house, and my number,
and the quickest way to my street.

SO SEPARATE AND STRANGE

So separate and strange was she
saying my name, taking my love.
As though she were the legend of
some ritual of ancient fame,
so separate and strange was she
taking my love, saying my name.

Where I awoke with hungering eyes
it might have been that citron land
of Merlin and his anguished band;
it might have been some mad Cockaigne.
So separate and strange was she
to walk me where the lilies reign;
and there I lay, and fed me quite,
on the slow apples of the night.

Now it were better had I died,
drowned like a sailor as he slept,
washed like a jewel with the tide,
prize to the moon of his surprise
where the flagged fish awoke his fear.
But ah, so witching were her lies—
as to fond music there, I wept,
and low she laughed at every tear
to think I suffered such a change
for one so separate and strange.

JANE STUART

HAWICKS' CROSSING

Upon a night like this, long years ago
I sat beneath September's silver stars
And watched Rebecca's tiny flying feet
Dance to the laughing gypsy's wild guitars.

Oh, my Rebecca, how the years have passed
Since first you danced for me upon that night;
Your copper hair that curled across your shoulder
Will now have faded to a clover white!

A lantern hung across an outstretched tree limb;
Its light shone down like bricks of gypsy gold
That melted with the first touch of your footstep
And hid themselves beneath your skirt's full fold.

Your curly hair looked russet in the firelight,
Soft angel hair floating across the sky;
You wove in it a wreath of fresh-picked flowers
One was the silver-blue shade of your eye.

You wore a star upon one tapering finger;
A moonbeam bracelet wound around your wrist;
A necklace filled with stardust at your throat;
Across your shoulders fell a shawl of mist.

The sky lay sprawled like folds of deep blue silk
Pinned with a jeweled brooch, the orange moon
Whose light came through the spokes of wagon wheels
And formed a staircase in an empty room.

You danced, enchanted by the gypsies' music;
Your feet took wings, and slowly they rose higher
Until they brushed the rows of corn and broomsage
And slid across a yellow moonbeam wire.

You danced until the moon began to fade,
Until your finger wore no silver star,
Until the music slowly died away—
The gypsy lay aside his tired guitar.

We walked together that September morning,
Your bare feet bathed in crystal pools of dew;
Your face was orange as the breaking dawn
When first we kissed, and I said, "I love you."

Oh, Rebecca, all these years I've waited.
Where did you go, that copper-tinted dawn
I awoke, beside the fire's cold ashes?
But when I called your name I found you gone.

All my life, I've searched for you, Rebecca;
And now, upon this cool September night
Once more I stand alone at Hawicks' Crossing
Beneath the Harvest moon's soft eerie light.

I hear again the sound of wooden wagons,
I see a swinging lantern's golden light,
But still I see no group of laughing people
I hear no voices in the silent night.

And now I see a smiling woman
With dark blue skirts, and graying copper hair
Who waits for me beside her painted wagon
And blows a kiss to me across the air.

JESSE STUART

HEART-SUMMONED

Sometimes in bonnet that she
 used to wear
And faded dress by wild-rose
 brambles torn,
She moves so lightly on her
 path of air
As she returns, a mother
 to her son.

She does not knock nor does she
 come within
To tell me who her new
 companions are.
She vanishes upon her path
 of wind,
Accompanied, perhaps, by
 cloud or star.

THE GONE

November rain's down-pouring all night long
In silver arrows angling from the sky,
Tapping his roof in a tattooing song;
Above this muffled song he heard a cry.
The sassafras beside the cellar wall
Was giving green-leaf dollars to the wind;
Then, there were rising footsteps and their fall

Of those who had once lived here, walking in.
The open fire had shrunk to dying embers
When he switched on the dry electric lamp;
And while he stirred both fire and memories
The rain blew in, his pillow-case was damp.
And, here before the embers burning low
The cheerful light drove out the dismal gloom;
He sat among them whom he used to know
For all the gone had gathered in his room.

SPRING VOICES

This is not the wind in the weeping willow tree
Who speaks to me on a convalescing bed
Placed by the window where I hear and see,
These are real voices, not dreams in my head!
They have returned, these lovers long departed
To this fair valley where they used to be;
They come unseen before spring blooms are shed
To talk, laugh, sing and love as merrily
As pairs of singing bluebirds in the spring
Who have their nests with eggs in a tree and post;
With April songs they make this valley ring,
Of all our songbirds, bluebirds sing the most.
Their singing vies with lovers I can't see
Who talk and laugh beneath the willow tree.

TWO LEAVES

The multi-colored hosts drift down the sky,
Hand-heart-star-shaped and autumn-light and thin;
And you and I are two leaves drifting by

With other loves in legions of the wind.
We two drift with a million other leaves
High over earth on silver, windy lanes,
Over dark hills of home and naked trees
And stubble fields and golden shocks of grain.
Look up, my love, don't turn your head away,
Look high, my love, as if you were a star;
You are the golden leaf, I am the gray
And we go drifting as the others are.
Come, put your hand in mine, let's not pretend
For love is just as high as we are high,
We'll travel on the silver lanes of wind
Among the other lovers in the sky.

EXTENDED INVITATION

I knew this Master Host would hold me in
His clayey house where millions now reside,
Where there would be no folded hills, no wind,
No way of knowing whom I slept beside.

The branches on his trees would be austere
Without a blossom or an April spring;
Being his guest how could I rise to hear
From my dark lonely room just one bird sing?

A candidate who met him face to face
And though selected as a single choice
Did not want him to take me from life's race,
Tether my fleeting feet or still my voice.

LUCIA TRENT

FRAIL HANDS

I came to the well-loved house
At the close of a somber day.
The wind had a rapier-edge,
The clouds were a gun-boat gray.

Rain dripped from the skeleton trees.
The grounds were sodden with leaves.
I heard a night-bird croak
From its nest in the sagging eaves,

And as I lifted the latch,
The door made an ominous sound.
My pulses began to race.
My heart began to pound.

Here was the room she had graced.
The room we had loved when young,
Now desolate like a song
Some idiot might have sung.

How mouldy the tables and chairs,
Faded pictures askew,
Windows smashed and streaked
With the cold rain pouring through!

There stood the harp on which
She had played quaint melodies.
I fell into a chair
Sunk in my reveries.

Then came a lonely sound.
Roused from remembering,
I saw frail hands reach out
And pluck the eerie strings.

LEWIS TURCO

THE SEER

Once, long ago, an aged seer
Existed in a state of fear
Because a verse
Throbbled endlessly within his brain.
Although he held it in disdain,
The paltry verse
Read like a curse
Thus: *Here I live and here I'll lie,
Dust beneath a dusty sky.*

He tried to drown it in a sea
Of magic and of alchemy—,
To no avail.
His potions helped him not a jot;
With every newt's tail, all he got
Was, without fail,
The same old tale:
Just, *Here I live and here I'll lie,
Dust beneath a dusty sky.*

He waged a never-ending fight
And knew no peace through day or night

Because the verse,
 No matter how much he rebelled,
 Would in no circumstance be quelled,
 But just grew worse
 And more perverse
 With: *Here I dwell and here I'll sleep,*
Motes below a mighty deep.

He told no soul of his torment,
 But tried to fathom its portent . . . ,
 It was no use.
 He could not solve its mystery
 And, in his woeful misery,
 The old recluse
 Found more abuse
 In *Here I live and here I'll lie,*
Dust beneath a dusty sky.

Long lived the haunted, tortured seer
 Until, in life's autumnal year,
 The seer imbibed
 A poisoned cup to find release.
 Upon the stone that marked his peace
 A fool inscribed
 (And diatribed)
 Thus: *Here I lived, and here I lie,*
Dust beneath a dusty sky.

GATHER THESE BONES

i. One Song for Old Bones

Father, come home.
 The rat gnaws my bone.

The mouse chews my hair.
Under my ear sleeps the flagstone;
My eyes turn nowhere.

Father, it is a wide world.
The wind is cold.
Cold is the mist of morningtime
When dawn is born to grow old—
Cold as the turning tide.

Mother eases in the lizard's couch;
Sister hums in the oak crotch.
Brother has sailed to murder time
With a cane handle; the head of a crutch.
I stay behind.

My socket is sprung
Wide as the sea's life is long.
White shall my bone dust be.
My jaw falls with song.
The spider toils inside me.

ii. Sonata for Wind and Wood

As my blood has run,
So runs the wind
Under the moon,
Over the limb.

In the branching of night
Wind stills my breath.
In flues of recall grows lichen,
And moss on the hearth.

An owl lives in my head,
Shrews in the wood.

Hark! silent wings sense bread—
Come, cowl and hood.

The world's yard lists
Now windward, now lee.
Under my toenail twists
The trysting tree.

As blood will run,
Thus runs the wind
Under the moon,
Over the limb.

iii. Theme for a Dust Devil

My muscle is fertile, fair as the land;
I do not lie fallow.
My marrow is the tree's marrow.

My hair waxes green as the green leaf.
Let no grief but air's grief slip
Down the sky to whet my lip:

I want to pledge but the willow's oath.
The dog digs in my mouth.
When flocks forage further south,

Squirrels mistake my skull for a nut—
I nod in assent,
Grinning with the best intent.

Nor rave aloud, wife, for the wind will woo
You in your bed with my voice.
Listen, you will hear the noise

Of my lovemaking shaking the holly.
Our cottage ticking was warm.
Slow is the heat of the worm.

iv. Plainchant among the maidenhair

There is no mercy here
In the lizard's wood.
Children, beware.

The toad tunnels in my ear.
Night has crept beneath my hood.
There is no mercy here

In this grove where
Roots take my maidenhead.
Children, beware—

Dark is the maidenhair;
Dark, the salamander's blood.
There is no mercy here:

The sycamores bear
Old spores, new wood.
Children, beware

These precincts. Forswear
My shallow bed.
There is no mercy here;
Children, beware.

v. Libretto in White

The urchin swims in my brow;
As the moon drowns, it is stung.

I troll the snail's libretto
With a slug for a tongue.
The conch knows my song.

I wait in salt and coral.
Searching for the worm's light,
Only the anemone's floral
Ruin meets my starred sight
In the tide's night.

I hear the sound of keels
Scraping my sky.
About my heart, eels
Breathe and swallow. The sigh
Of the squid rakes my thigh.

This is no way
For blood to come home.
Silt is my prey;
My prayer is bone—
My love, stone.

vi. Epitaph in a Minor Key

Willowwillow,
Weep for me
Buried neath
The blood root tree;

Socket clogged by
Digging root;
Nostril pierced
By
Seedling shoot;

Rocks, miasmas
In my breast—
Willowill
O
Guard my rest.

MARK VAN DOREN

OLDEST CEMETERY

I go downhill some days to a little room
Where the first people put their souls to sleep,
And where four walls of fallen fieldstone keep
Close rumor of their names, with verses cut
(I lie and read) against forgetful doom.
Remembered, they would rise in fields of rest
As far away as east is from the west;
Or farther, past all compass; for they shut
This wilderness of time, of nature out;
They thought to wake in such a world of light
As no man works for, warned of coming night;
Pure joy and peace it was. And so they put
Each weary soul to bed, with owls and crows
To watch, and weeds to deepen its repose.

Some days I think the end has come and gone.
Sound fell, and they got up, and where they lay
Was nothing now but litter as away
On wings they went and had their dream at last:
The universe was over. Time goes on
As always, and the same birds in the sky

Declare it, but without hope's reason why:
Tick, tick, until the finish. Or, no blast
Of horns was heard, no host of angels passed;
It all was childish error, and these stones
But tilt above time's waste. And whose the bones?
The verses tell. I ponder then, steadfast,
Expectant. No, the end is coming still
For such as these, on this forgotten hill.

HAROLD VINAL

FLIGHT

Who shall know the way
That her feet took
By a sapless tree,
By a dried brook?

None woke to hear;
She left no door ajar;
Down the road of night
She went like a star.

She felt a deadman's kiss
On her light as air;
She felt a deadman's hand
Tremble on her hair.

In the hush of dawn
Down a trail lost,
She reached a river
That she never crossed.

GHOSTLY REAPER

Now while the wind is up, I hear
A dark scythe swung in air;
A door creaks by the crooked elm—
Who is reaping there?

Who goes to cut the field tonight
Beside the lily pond?
Who comes to swing a rusty scythe
From Limbo, or beyond?

SLEEPING VILLAGE

We came upon the village of the dead,
A township of closed doors that never swing
Open to leaf or sunshine, and you said:
"Pity the old, my friend, who see no spring
Blossom along the furrows, and who hear
No bird above the dew; pity the young
Who left unread the script that seemed so clear,
While yet the words were honey to the tongue."

The village did not wake, nor answer stir
From the departed who were done with time;
No rumor rose from any sepulchre
To prove the riddle of the Great Sublime.
We only heard the slipping of the clod
Upon the latest stranger gone to God.

GENTLEMAN IN OILS

A gentleman in oils, he almost seemed
To come alive at times and be as one
Of us, for when the guttering candles gleamed,
A wink was known to flash as though in fun.
He mocked our trepidations, but of course
It was a fancy in our foolish heads;
We shuddered, laughed, and ceased to fear the worse,
Forgot our repartee and sought our beds.

Climbing the curving stairs to reach the high
Dim universe of slumber, I was wont
To cast a backward glance and so descry
The judge in oils, still arrogant and gaunt;
And once I saw, great heavens, with a sweep
Of robust horror, he had gone to sleep.

A WREATH FOR ONE LOST

*Chorus, tell the tragedy, announce the death,
Say there were a winding-sheet and an elegy written,—
But what of her whom we mourn?*

Now is the earth a place of desolation,
She being dead and lost to us forever;
Now is the earth a place of cobwebs and dust.

*Chorus, tell the tragedy: say she was proud and wicked
And her lips were painted with folly;
Tell how the warriors fought for her and the spears gleamed.*

But we knew her as night wind blowing over the grasses,
As grain waving before the hiss of the scythe,
And as the falling of snow in winter.

The fields have gone arid, the locusts have taken the
orchards,
The grasshoppers have made a city of the fields,
The water-courses have dried and the bins are empty.

*Chorus, say there was singing in the groves of Apollo,
And wreaths twined, and the smoke of sacrifice,—
But what of her whom we mourn?*

Thus death came, not only to her but to us as well;
And in her dying we died, and so were buried;
And the laurel they put on her grave is on ours as well.

*Chorus, tell the tragedy, announce the death,
Say there were a winding-sheet and an elegy written;
But what of her whom we mourn?*

WE, THE FEW WHO BELIEVE

Where are the gods? Tell me, where is Aegir?
Where is Odin, the amorous for battle?
Where is Zeus, the giver of victory?

Their names are dust on the tongue and never spoken;
We solicit them no longer, we ask no favors
Of anyone, we make no obeisance.

Our harvest comes in its season from Maine to Oregon.
We do not need to pray to Rhea, though once
She smiled upon our barren fields and they prospered.

TOWARD AVERNUS

He had no pact with time: his mind was ever
Vexed with the riddle of eternity;
His spirit burned with an immortal fever,
Betrayed by clocks that ticked remorselessly.
So by some crafty logic he inferred
Hope was a promise; that beyond the blind
Enigma of the dust no timepiece purred
A sharp implicit summons to the mind.

HEIMDALL

His name was Heimdall and it was a name
That suited one who, more occult than most,
Could see the genii in the smoke and flame
Before they cleared, or circumvent a ghost
In any astral corner. Like Heimdall
Who heard the grass grow in Asgard, he seemed
Closer to heaven than to earth; his tall
Shadow was mighty, and his eyeballs gleamed.

I think, he surely must have come to earth
By way of lofty Bifrost, the bridge that
Swung between time and space; he had his birth
Among the stars where Tyr and Odin sat.
Lost in a happy ether, looking where
Midgard, the earth, was hanging by a hair.

THE WELL-FINDER

By what strange prescience he plucks the green
Bough from the air, so in his hungry hand
The magic crotch burns bright, from the unseen
He gathers wisdom as he walks the land.
The cattle drowse about him, the long acres
Burn into gold but like a wakeless sleeper
Possessed by dreams, he hears across the air,
More than the soft scythe of the immortal reaper.

And so he walks waiting to feel the bough
Leap like a magnet in his palm, he listens
To catch those spirit waters that wake now
In the lost darkness of forgotten cisterns,
To boil and bubble upward to the sun,
Drawn from the dark sleep of oblivion.

DONALD WANDREI

WATER SPRITE

(After a pen-and-ink drawing by Howard Wandrei)

Laughing, she flashes down the shifting tides of green,
Or whirls
Where the rippling waters ebb and flow between
Her coral isles and shadowy pearls
That glimmer beneath her sunless, wind-departed skies.
Sometimes her gleaming eyes
With beauty of frail and waving fronds go wide,
Sometimes she dreams to music of murmuring waves

That tremble and fall in tide on foaming tide,
Or rests where on ocean current laves
The rocks on a sunken shore.
Sometimes in cool delight she floats on drifting weeds
Where breakers and lonely waters roar,
Or speeds
To capture an errant eel
That enters her wide domain.
From dawn to dusk her white sides feel
The rush of waves that seek in vain
To capture a breast, to hold the hair
That streams from her glowing body bare
Till at last, in her caverned halls
Where sea-friends dwell,
She falls,
And sinks to sleep in a sounding shell.

THE WOMAN AT THE WINDOW

(After a pen-and-ink drawing by Howard Wandrei)

Beyond the window's tracery
Of arabesques the blood-red sun,
Amid a realm of sorcery
Stares with an eye she can not shun.

Out of the window's smouldering red
In all the years by time begun,
With that wild color overspread,
Her face has watched the dying sun.

She scans the shadows of her land,
The crimson, never-setting sun,

The blood-dull waving wastes of sand
That her domain has overrun.

Ever the orb's fantastic glare
Of burning, baleful scarlet spun
Meets the mysterious woman's stare
Locked fast with that hypnotic sun.

Till darkness falls—it never will—
Her vigil never will be done:
Her timeless vision staring still
Beyond the lifetime of the sun.

THE PREHISTORIC HUNTSMAN

They found him deep within an ancient cave
Bearing the world upon his broken shoulders,
The prehistoric huntsman in his grave,
Trapped in a crevice by great settling boulders.

In his hand a stone-pick; in his mummied eyes
An eagerness; and pain upon his features
Where the rock-fall caught him with a sad surprise
And made him one with all earth's humblest creatures.

What did he seek, this wayfarer of old?
Some arrowed beast crept to its hillside fastness?
Of was he bent on dark adventure, bold,
In alien land, by night's resounding vastness?

Like all his deeds, his very name unknown,
The vanished mists of time enshroud him, hide him;

Lost in that dim dawn-age he died alone
Yet all who gaze upon him walk beside him.

THE CHALLENGER

He passed beyond the utmost realm of stars,
Beyond the heavens' great celestial throng,
In search of vengeance for an ancient wrong
Inflicted by the gods in elder wars.
He burst asunder all the whelming bars
Of Time and Space, and strode upon his long
Abyssal pilgrimage, undaunted, strong
From all the healing of a myriad scars.
Forever mounting past the realm of light
He stood at last before the citadel
That rose from out the gulfs of utter night,
Scorning alike deific throne or hell,
And on the doors of doom, disdainful, hurled
His cosmic challenge in an alien world.

FOREST SHAPES

They are curious things that hide in the woods
And cower behind the black tree boles
With their faces dissolved and deathly heads
Where the little lithe worm still tumbles and crawls,
And a rat-like sound of pitter and patter,
And the echoing mirth of a sullen mutter,
And the dirge of a wind that whispers and dies
Over the treetops, under the boughs,
While scattered leaves in mildewed heaps
Cover the form whose hand still gropes.

LYRIC OF DOUBT

She walks with stately grace.
Her grave, grey eyes a beauty hide
That has no counterpart in lands of time
Or space;
And in her movements, languid charms abide.

A grey dusk mists the air,
But never changes, never fades,
And neither dawn nor darkness shades her clime,
No glare
Of sun illumines the mouldy balustrades.

There are no eyes to see,
No voice to tell of days that were,
No ears to hear her footsteps die away.
The three
Old prophecies alone accompany her.

She walks with dust and dreams.
All else is still the realm around.
And she alone has beauty, grave and grey.
She seems
A phantom of a kingdom of no sound.

WADE WELLMAN

ON THE STAIRCASE

He feared the dark, his parents knew;
He thought that on the stair,

Awaiting him, half out of view,
Was something like a bear.
They laughed, and sent him off to bed;
"No danger waits for you!" they said.

Then silence lowered on the night,
Until they heard a scream
Which pierced them with a deadly fright,
Like phantoms in a dream;
And when they hurried up the stair,
They found his body mangled there.

A BALLAD OF DESPAIR

"What is your tragedy, brother of mine?
Listen! The wind rushes loud through the pine,
And once I have toasted your future in wine;
So what is your tragedy, brother of mine?"

"Oh, once I was hopeful, but now I am sore,
And now my heart yearns for the future no more;
I only seek peace in the valley below,
For there will I rest, and my grief will not flow."

"Then why are you weeping, and why shed this tear?
The valley lies homeward, with nothing to fear,
And you will be saved from the pain that is here;
So why are you weeping, and why shed this tear?"

"Oh, I have been homeward already, in pain;
My ears have been drowned by the noise of the rain—
I hear my death whistling sharp in the pine,
And that is my tragedy, brother of mine."

JAMES L. WEIL

FANCY FISHING

Empty of stars still
and youth being
the open season for
fancy fishing
with no
restriction on
line length or
weight,

 deep last
night under where
the lunar lure will
bring
all to the surface, back
and forth I
snapped my
lightning rod until

out from the black
there
struck so
strong a stroke of
brilliance at the pull
I felt myself let go,

and with it
blinded, just gathering
the moon was full

again, lit
up a cloud in
one moment's flash,
then left the world
overcast.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

COMPANIONS

Here alone in the night between wind and water
I am not as much alone as you would think—
The boughs rub together with soft-talking human noises,
And down at the black lake's brink
"Hush—" and "Hush" I can hear the lapping say
As if something waited to move till I had gone away.

There are sounds like steps in the house as I lie half-wakened,
And tiny murmurs like words that I almost know
As if there had been little things here before my coming
That had forgotten to go . . .
And a silent touch that pushes a door or pane
And stops to listen, and tries to come in again.

For when I go out through the trees in the thick black shadow
To bring in wood by my line of tiny light
There some soft stroking touches along my shoulder
Reminding me it is night . . .
And the well chain creaks as if somebody came to drink.
I am less alone than you think.

GHOST TO COME

I wonder the way ghosts come to be. . . . Do you think there will be a
ghost,
A colored shadow-part left from me, when I'm dead and gone and lost?
I come to the door of my new-built house and look down my road
tonight
And smell the cones of my lilac-bush where they shine in my candle-
light
And pull my scarlet coat more close from the Fall wind now, and grieve
A little for Fall and the end of day, and a world that I'll some day leave,
I hear the lap of my quiet lake where it moves to find the river,
And feel I am warm and alive and new, and my life shall be forever. . . .

"Beyond this overgrown old lost road there was once a house," they'll
say,
Where now there is only a cellar-hole, and the folks all gone away,
But whatever there was that happened then, there's nothing to tell us,
now,
But some bricks and a straggly lilac-bush and the blade of a buried plow:
But late Fall nights when the moon's gone down, if you pass the little
lake,
(The noise might be only a deer gone by, or a twig that your foot will
break)
A light comes on where there couldn't be light, and a woman comes to a
door
In a house that looks as real as can be . . . but it wasn't there before—
She's dressed in a queer red coat, they say—but there isn't a soul that
knows
Whoever she was or what she wants, or why it all comes or goes.

LORING WILLIAMS

THE SKEPTIC

The burning eye
of noon bore down
from brassy sky
to scorch the town

and singe the yields
that men must eat
in thirsty fields
of precious wheat;

the river seemed
a gasping breath
that mutely screamed
of drouth and death,

and every well
was dry as dust
yet no rain fell
to break the curse.

Day's fiery orb,
broiling the square,
withered the mob
of natives there

mustered from farm
and village cots
in grave alarm
to cast their lots.

A stranger paused . . .
"Why crowd you here;
what panic caused
this frantic fear?"

*We meet with Death,
for folk-tales say
one here must breathe
his last today!*

*Soon from its high
meridian
the Awful Eye
will choose that one!*

"What dolts you be
to quake and quail;
fools, fools, deny
this old-wives' tale."

But, while he spoke,
the sky turned black
and fury broke
behind his back.

The blazing eye
of God was hid
under the thunder's
angry lid.

While lightning slit
the hidden blue
and all but split
the sky in two.

the weird winds wrenched
black clouds apart
and fairly drenched
each field and heart.

A jagged knife
of pointed flame,
demanding life
to play its game,

stabbed through the stark
mad multitude
and struck its mark—
and that was good!

Now villagers
went safely home
and every farmer
to his farm;

but cold as clay
and silent, there,
the stranger lay
in the village Square.

RECOMPENSE

Once, in the gathering twilight,
she walked to the desolate cabin,
swung the complaining door
and slipped inside . . .
waiting there in the shadows.

So plainly could she see him
standing
tall and stalwart
that she felt, after all,
God had been a little kind to her:
in the cruelty of taking him away,
He had left her something.

Always, in the calm of early twilight,
in the shadows of his cabin
she could re-create him
(wholesome, and strong, and kind)
as though he were standing before her.

JAMES WRIGHT

THE GHOST

I cannot live nor die.
Now shadows rise nor fall,
Whisper aloud nor weep.
Struck beyond time and change
To a claw, a withering thigh,
A breath, a slackening call
To cold throats out of range,
I fade to a broken hope.

What good may mourning do,
The sigh, the soft lament,
The poised turning away
To name one faded name?
I will not name it now.

The day, the heart lie spent.
I find, now that I came,
Love that I cannot say.

The wind builds hock and tongue
Up from the sinewy ground.
But how may the blind air tell
A gnat from a lark? Alone,
Weighed by the laboring sound
Of wind on muscle and hair,
White as a thistle and bare,
I close the gate of hell.

Neat, shallow, hell is here,
Here, where I speak to lips
At one with stone and me,
Living and dead at one:
Love's cry, the shock of fear,
The shadow of rain that drips,
A mirror of gleaming stone,
The hands that cannot see,

Ears stricken blind, and eyes
That cannot speak nor sing,
And arms that barely breathe
Above ground or below.
Lumbering from hell, I gaze
Down at the earth so long,
I need no further go.
Here is the gate of wreath.

Love need no further go
Than back to the earth, to die.
The living need not seek
For love but underfoot.

The first star rises slow
And brambles lash my eye
And lichens trip my foot,
And yet, I cannot speak.

I will stand here, till dawn.
I will not fall down, to pray.
Dark bells may summon you
Out of your dream to cry.
Then I will tread your lawn
Through a soft break of day,
To see your day go by,
Who stare, and stare me through.

ELINOR WYLIE

ATAVISM

I always was afraid of Soame's Pond:
Not the little pond, by which the willow stands,
Where laughing boys catch alewives in their hands
In brown, bright shallows; but the one beyond.
There, when the frost makes all the birches burn
Yellow as cow-lilies, and the pale sky shines
Like a polished skull between black spruce and pines,
Some strange thing tracks us, turning where we turn.

You'll say I dream it, being the true daughter
Of those who in old times endured this dread.
Look! Where the lily-stems are showing red
A silent paddle moves below the water,
A sliding shape has stirred them like a breath;
Tall plumes surmount a painted mask of death.

Contributors

GEORGE ABBE is the author of such novels as *Voices in the Square*, *Dreamer's Clay*, and *Mr. Quill's Crusade*, and of five collections of poems: *Wait for These Things*, *Letter Home*, *Bird in the Mulberry*, *The Wide Plains Roar*, *The Incandescent Beast*. He has been widely published in everything from the quality magazines and the quarterlies to the little reviews. In 1956 he was awarded the Shelley Memorial Award of \$1,000 for *The Incandescent Beast*. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1961.

HELEN ADAM was born in Glasgow, Scotland. She was brought up on the old Scottish ballads and has all her life been interested in the macabre and the supernatural. She was educated in Edinburgh, and has since lived in London, New York, and the San Francisco bay region. She is the author of *The Queen of Crow Castle*, illustrated by Jess Collins, and has been published in *Galley Sail Review*, *New American Poetry*, etc. She is now working in a new medium for her, opera, with her first produced in late 1961 in San Francisco.

ETHAN AYER has been widely published in magazines ranging from *Voices* and *American Weave* to *The Literary Review* and *Recurrence*. In 1951, Little, Brown & Company published his first novel, but poetry has always been his first love. He studied poetry under Leonora Speyer at Columbia University, though his college major was philosophy.

ROBERT HAYWARD BARLOW (1918-1951) was a promising poet affiliated with the Activist group in California and Mexico at the time of his early death. He was a Mayan scholar, a Guggenheim Fellow, and director of the Nahuatl project for the State of Morelos, appointed by the Mexican government. He was also head of the department of Mexican anthropology at Mexico City College from 1948 onward. He was born in Leavenworth, Kansas, and was for many years a correspondent of H. P. Lovecraft, inheriting the Lovecraft papers on Lovecraft's death—papers which ultimately found their way to Arkham House and to the Lovecraft Collection at the John Hay Library of Brown University in Providence.

WILLIAM D. BARNEY of Texas is the author of *Kneel from the Stone* and *Permitted Proof*. His poems have appeared in many magazines, and his first collection was co-winner of a \$1,250 Borestone Mountain Poetry Award.

GENE BARO was born in New York in 1924. He has been widely published here and abroad in such magazines as *Discovery*, *Poetry*, *Botteghe Oscure*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*, *Stand*, etc. He reviews for the New York *Herald-Tribune* Books, has broadcast and lectured on cultural subjects, and is on the Advisory Board of the Creative Film Foundation. He has taught at various colleges and is on the literature faculty at Bennington College. His first book, *Northwind and Other Poems*, was published by Scribner's in *Poets of Today VI*, in 1959.

LORNA BEERS CHAMBERS grew up in Maple Plain, Minnesota, the youngest of a large family of children. She was graduated from the University of Minnesota, with honors, and as a Phi Beta Kappa; she subsequently did graduate work at Ann Arbor and at George Washington University. She has published three adult novels—*Prairie Fires*, *A Humble Lear*, and *The Mad Stone*, which was an Avery Hopwood Award novel—two juvenile novels, *The Book of Hugh Flower* and *The Crystal Cornerstone*—and has contributed to *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Fiddlehead*, *Stepladder*, *Yankee*, *Voices*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Literary Review*, and other magazines. She lives on an old hill farm in Vermont.

LAURA BENÉT was brought up in the United States army, her father being an officer in the Ordnance Corps, stationed in posts in various places. She is a graduate of the Emma Willard School in Troy and of Vassar College. She went into social work at the Spring Street Settlement until circumstances and her brothers' young children forced her into writing, which she could do at home. She is the author of nineteen books, ranging from juveniles and biography to poetry, of which the most recent is *In Love with Time*. She lives at present in New York.

JOHN BETJEMAN is one of England's most celebrated poets, critics and taste-makers, as well as a staunch champion of England's past. He was born in 1906 and attended Oxford. He is the author of such books as *Ghastly Good Taste*, *First and Last Loves*, *A Few Late Chrysanthemums*, *The English Town in the Last Hundred Years*, *An American's Guide to English Parish Churches*, and a novel biography in verse, *Summoned by Bells*. In 1948 his *Selected Poems* won the Heinemann Award, and ten years later his *Collected Poems* was a phenomenal best-seller.

ROBERT BLOCH is not too frequently given to verse. He has contributed to many magazines, primarily science-fiction and the macabre, mystery and suspense, ranging from *Weird Tales* to *Playboy*. Born in Milwaukee, he now lives on the West Coast, where he writes teleplays for such shows as *Thrillers* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. He is the author of almost a dozen books, among them *The Opener of the Way*, *The Dead Beat*, *The Scarf*, *Spiderweb*, *Terror in the Night*, *Shooting Star*, and the best-selling *Psycho*, made internationally famous by Alfred Hitchcock on the screen. His most recent book is *Blood Runs Cold*.

SAM BRADLEY is one of the editors of *Approach*, a recent issue of which carried his penetrating *Approach to Seven Poets*. His *Roc's Brood* won a prize as the best Starlanes poem of 1959.

JOSEPH PAYNE BRENNAN was born in 1918 in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and reared in New Haven, where he still lives while he works at the Yale Library. He is the editor of *Essence* and *Macabre*. His work had appeared widely—in *The American Scholar*, *The Chicago Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Reader's Digest*, *Coronet*, etc., etc., and his poetry has been widely anthologized. He is the author of two collections of macabre tales, *Nine Horrors and a Dream* and *The Dark Returners*, and of three

collections of poetry—*Heart of Earth*, *The Humming Stair*, and *The Wind of Time*.

JULIAN BROWN is a California poet who has been published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Coastlines*, *Coronet*, *Look*, *American Legion Magazine*, *Writer's Digest*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and many other magazines.

WINIFRED ADAMS BURR is a Massachusetts poet whose verse has appeared in many magazines. Her most recent book is *Design for Courage*.

SARA KING CARLETON is a native New Yorker. She has contributed to *Harper's*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribner's*, *Voices*, and many other periodicals. Her most recent collection of verse is *The New Country*.

LIN CARTER, Florida-born, lives and works in New York City. While studying at Columbia University, he attended Leonie Adam's Poetry Workshop. He is the author of two volumes of fantastic verse, *Sandalwood and Jade* and *Galleon of Dream*, and a third, *Dreams from R'lyeh*, is forthcoming. Mr. Carter has contributed various studies of H. P. Lovecraft and his work to fanzines and to *The Shuttered Room and Other Pieces*.

MABEL MACDONALD CARVER is a native of Illinois at present living in New York. Her poetry has been widely published, and she is equally well known for her painting. She is the author of a novel, *The Red Wall*, and of the poetry collections, *Out of Asia*, and *The Golden Rain Tree*.

GERTRUDE CLAYTOR was born in Virginia, and was graduated from Virginia College in Roanoke. Her poems have appeared in *The Saturday Review*, *Voices*, *The Lyric*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The New York Times*, and elsewhere. She has served as advisory editor of Borestone Mountain Poetry Awards. She is the author of two collections, *Sunday in Virginia and Other Poems* and *Mirage at Midnight and Other Poems*. She resides in New York City.

ELIZABETH COATSWORTH, in private life Mrs. Henry Beston, was born in Buffalo, New York, and has degrees from Vassar and Columbia. She now lives in Maine. She has contributed prose and poetry to many magazines, including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Yale Review*, *The Forum*, *The Saturday Review*, *The Dial*, *The Bookman*, *Poetry*, *Harper's*. She is the author of many books, among them *Country Neighborhood*, *South Shore Town*, *Summer Green*, *The Creaking Stair*, *Silky*, *Mountain Bride*, *The Home of the Swan*, *The Cat Who Went to Heaven*, *Here I Stay*, *Maine Ways*, *The Enchanted*, *Twelve Months Make a Year*, *Knock at the Door*.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ is widely known as a poet, editor, and author. He is a Californian. His verse has appeared in many magazines, among them *American Weave*, *Versecraft*, *Poetry Review* (London), *Weird Tales*, *The American Mercury*, *The New York Times*, *The Christian Century*, etc. He was for many years editor of *Wings* and The Wings Press. He has compiled *Modern British Lyrics*, *Modern American Lyrics*, *The Music Makers*, and written many books, among them *Green Vistas*, *Garnered Sheaves*, *An Editor Looks at Poetry*, *The Sunken World*, *Unseen Wings*, *Time's Travelers*, *From a Western Hilltop*, *The Mountain of the Sleeping Maiden*.

GRANT CODE, Wisconsin-born, now lives in New York City where he appears regularly on the stage. He is the author of two collections of poems, and

has contributed to such magazines as *Poetry*, *Hound and Horn*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *Gyroscope*, and *Smoke*.

BEVERLY CONNELLY is an upstate New Yorker. She is a graduate of a secretarial school, but is now teaching music. Her poetry has been published in *Golden Quill*, *Flame*, *Modernalia*, *Different*, *The New Athenaeum*, *The Denver Post*, and has appeared in six anthologies.

MARY ELIZABETH COUNSELMAN is widely known for her stories of the macabre, particularly the classic *Three Marked Pennies*. She has contributed to *Weird Tales*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines, and is the author of a forthcoming collection of fantastic tales, *Half in Shadow*. She lives in Alabama.

MARGARET STANION DARLING has published in *The Lantern*, *Blue Moon*, *Prairie Poet*, *The Muse*, *Think*, *American Bard*, and many other magazines. She lives in Ithaca, New York.

GUSTAV DAVIDSON was founder and editor of *The Madrigal* and *Rhythmus*, and is editor of The Fine Editions Press as well as Secretary of the Poetry Society of America and an editor of The Book Club for Poetry. His verse has been widely published. His books include *Thirst of the Antelope*, *Moment of Visitation*, *In Fealty to Apollo*, and *Principalities and Powers*.

AUGUST DERLETH is one of the most prolific and versatile of living writers. The present collection is his 95th published book, and 20 more are written and awaiting publication. Fifteen of his books are collections of poetry; his *Selected Poems* carried an introduction by Edgar Lee Masters, and his most recent collection, *West of Morning*, was a selection of the Book Club for Poetry. He is editor-owner of Arkham House: Publishers, literary editor of *The Capital Times* (Madison, Wisconsin), and editor of a little review, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*. He was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1938. He has been widely published here and abroad, having contributed to *Redbook*, *The New Republic*, *Scribner's*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, *Holiday*, *Coronet*, *Pagany*, *Dictionary of American Biography*, *Story*, *This Quarter*, many others. His books include *Wind Over Wisconsin*, *Walden West*, *The Moon Tenders*, *Evening in Spring*, *Wisconsin in Their Bones*, *The Hills Stand Watch*, *The Shield of the Valiant*, *The House on the Mound*, *The Wisconsin*, *Sleep No More*, *Village Year*, etc.

ALFRED DORN teaches literature and composition at New York University, from which he holds both a B.S. and an M.A. His poetry has appeared in many periodicals, and he is the author of two collections, *Flamenco Dancer* and *Wine in Stone*.

LEAH BODINE DRAKE is the author of two collections of poetry. *A Hornbook for Witches* and *This Tilting Dust*, which won the 1954 \$1,250 Borestone Mountain Poetry Award. She has been published in many magazines ranging from *Weird Tales* to *The Atlantic Monthly*, and her work has been anthologized in *Dark of the Moon*, *New Poems by American Poets*, *Jubilee*, and Braithwaite's for 1959. She is a native Kentuckian, but is currently engaged in doing editorial work in Lausanne, Switzerland.

DOROTHY BURNHAM EATON has been published in *Yankee*, *Prairie Schooner*,

Hawk & Whippoorwill, *The Saturday Review*, *Voices*, *The Lyric*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, etc. A book of her selected poems, *True Places*, was published in 1955. She lives in Massachusetts.

CHARLES EDWARD EATON, one-time Vice-Consul at the American Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, has an A.B. from the University of North Carolina, and an M.A. from Harvard. He is a teacher as well as a writer of distinguished prose and poetry. His *The Shadow of the Swimmer* won the Ridgely Torrence Memorial Award in 1952, and his *The Greenhouse in the Garden* was one of the final nominees for the 1957 National Book Award. His most recent book is a collection of Brazilian tales, *Write Me from Rio*.

NORMA FARBER is a concert artist as well as a poet of more than usual merit. She is a graduate of Wellesley, and took her M.A. at Radcliffe. She received a *premier prix* in singing in Belgium, an award qualified "*avec la plus grande distinction, félicitations du jury*." She appears as soloist and in small ensemble groups with orchestra quite frequently, and yet finds time to write many poems. She has been published very widely, from *The Christian Science Monitor* to *Hawk & Whippoorwill*. Scribner's brought out her first collection, *The Hatch*, in *Poets of Today II*.

MARGUERITE GEORGE has been published in *Voices*, *The Lyric*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines and newspapers. Her verse has also been anthologized. Miss George is a Southerner now living in New York.

RYAH TUMARKIN GOODMAN was born in Russia and came to this country at the age of four. She has contributed verse to *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Saturday Review*, and other periodicals. She is the author of two collections of poems—*The Single Flame* and *In Time of Swallows*.

FRANCES ANGEVINE GRAY has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *The Lantern*, *The Step Ladder*, *The New York Herald-Tribune*, and others. She is the author of *Fragile Armor*.

LISA GRENELLE is a native New Yorker, and a one-time daily columnist with King Features. She teaches poetry and creative writing, and has been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *University of Kansas City Review*, *American Weave*, *Yankee*, *Educational Forum*, and other periodicals. She is the author of *This Day Is Ours* and *No Light Evaded*.

R. H. GRENVILLE was born in Bromley, Kent, England, and became a Canadian citizen in 1925. She has contributed to *Poetry Review* (London), *The Fiddlehead*, and many periodicals and anthologies.

AMY GROESBECK contributes to many magazines, and is active in various theatrical, literary and philanthropic organizations. She is a member of Actors' Equity. Mrs. Groesbeck was born in Bay Shore, New York, and continues to live in New York. She is the author of two collections—*Tales Gay and Ghastly* and *Gull Geometrics*.

ROBERT E. HOWARD (1906-1936) was a Texan who contributed many characters to the genre of the robust adventure tale. He is the author of several books

of prose, including *A Gent from Bear Creek, Skull-Face and Others, The Coming of Conan, Conan the Barbarian, The Sword of Conan, King Conan, Conan the Conqueror*, and of one collection of poems, *Always Comes Evening*.

ALETHA HUMPHREYS is an Iowan who has contributed prose and poetry to *The English Journal, The Snowy Egret, Flame, The Orphic Lute, Montana Poetry Quarterly, Quote, Caravan* and other magazines. She has studied with Paul Engle at the University of Iowa.

LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS was a protege of George Sterling. He was for some years associate editor of *Current Opinion*. He has written poetry for many years, and has been published in *The New Yorker, The Nation, The New Republic, Hawk & Whippoorwill, Poetry, The Saturday Review*, etc. He is the author of *Mill Talk and Other Poems*.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON lives in Dorset, England. His poems have appeared in most of the leading British and American periodicals, and have been included in many anthologies. His books have been published by Harrap, Benn and The Fine Editions Press.

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH is a Californian who is one of the most prolific American poets. His verse has appeared in most periodicals here and abroad, including *The Christian Science Monitor, Spirit, Prairie Schooner, Hawk & Whippoorwill, The Saturday Review, Argosy* (London), *The Kenyon Review, Harper's*, etc., etc. He has recorded his poetry for Harvard University and the Library of Congress. He is the author of *The Proud People, The Long Nights, The Hearth Lit*, and *Two Laughters*, which was a selection of the Book Club for Poetry.

MARTHA KELLER ROWLAND has contributed verse to *Harper's, Poetry, The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly, Decision, The Commonweal*, and other periodicals. She is the author of *Mirror to Mortality* and *Brady's Bend and Other Ballads*.

MARY KENNEDY is the author of *Mrs. Partridge Presents, Surprise to the Children*, and *Star on Her Forehead*. She is a native of Claxton, Georgia. In 1954 she won the William Rose Benét Memorial Award.

WALTER H. KERR is a native Indianan now employed in Washington, D.C. He has contributed poetry to *Driftwind, Blue Guitar, Symbolica, Olivant, Epos, Voices, Caxton Poetry Review, Golden Goose* and has been represented in *New Poems by American Poets*. His first collection, *Populations of the Heart*, was published this year.

HERMAN STOWELL KING is a West Virginia poet who has been published in many magazines, including *Hawk & Whippoorwill*.

VERA BISHOP KONRICK, a native of Texas, now lives in New Orleans. Her poems have appeared in many magazines and newspapers here and abroad. She is the author of one collection, *Moon Flame*.

FRANK BELKNAP LONG is a native New Yorker who began to write in his teens, both prose and verse. His first book was a now rare book of poems, *A Man from Genoa and Other Poems*. His short stories have been anthologized both

here and abroad in such collections as *Creeps by Night* and *Sleep No More!* He is the author of several books of prose, the best of which are *The Hounds of Tindalos* and *The Horror from the Hills*.

LILITH LORRAINE was born in Texas and still lives there, where she edits *Flame* and manages the Different Press. She has written extensively in the field of science-fiction, and is an active proponent of the best in poetry, at the same time serving as an exponent of the traditional in verse as opposed to obscurantist and incoherent experimentation. She is founder-director of Avalon. She is the author of several books, among them *Wine of Wonder*, *Not for Oblivion*, *The Lost Word*, and *Character Against Chaos*, and has for several years edited the annual Avalon anthology. She has been distinguished for her activity all her life in behalf of poetry.

ROSA ZAGNONI MARINONI is an Arkansan whose work has been published in many parts of the world. She is a native of Bologna, Italy, but has lived in America since 1898.

ANNE MARX, born in Germany, now lives in New York. She has contributed verse to the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Chatelaine*, *Canadian Home Journal*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *American Weave*, and many other periodicals. Following publication of an early collection in Germany, Mrs. Marx's *Into the Wind of Waking* was the American Weave Award Chapbook for 1960.

STANLEY MCNAIL is the editor of *The Galley Sail Review*, and the author of two collections, *Footsteps in the Attic* and *The Black Hawk Country*. Though Illinois-born, he is at present Labor Relations Assistant to the Director of Personnel for Western Greyhound Lines in San Francisco.

EDNA MEUDT is a Wisconsin poet whose verse has appeared in *Nature*, *Spirit*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *Quicksilver*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Antioch Review*, *The Spokesman*, *Creative Wisconsin*, and other magazines, as well as in several anthologies. Her first book, *Round River Canticle*, was published in 1960.

H. S. NEILL writes from Oklahoma.

ALDEN M. NOWLAN is a Canadian poet who has been published in *The Fiddlehead*, *Quicksilver*, and many other magazines. He is news editor of a New Brunswick weekly, and is the author of three collections of verse—*The Rose and the Puritan*, *A Darkness in the Earth*, and *Under the Ice*.

EDITH OGUTSCH was born in Germany in 1929 and brought up in England. She now lives in Los Angeles, where she studied her art at a poetry workshop under Nina Willis Walter. She has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Denver Post*, *Fiddlehead*, *Flame*, *Epos*, *Quote*, *Starlanes*, *Look*, *American Legion Magazine*, and other periodicals.

JENNIE M. PALEN is a graduate of New York University. An editor, teacher, writer, and critic, she has published two collections of poetry, *Moon Over Manhattan* and *Good Morning, Sweet Prince*, and has appeared in *Good Housekeeping*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Lyric*, *Voices*, *Spirit*, *American Weave*, *Wings*, *Best Poems of 1956*, and *The Golden Year*.

CONRAD PENDLETON is one of the editors of *Twentieth Century Literature*. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Voices*, *The Southwest Review*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Commonweal*, *The New Republic*, *The Lyric*, *Wings*, *Prairie Schooner*, and other periodicals. He is the author of *Slow Fire of Time*. A second book, *Time Turns West*, is being prepared. Mr. Pendleton has taught at the Universities of Michigan, Nebraska, Iowa and Oregon.

HYAM PLUTZIK has contributed to many magazines, including *Accent*, *The American Scholar*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Furioso*, *New World Writing*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Antioch Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Transatlantic Review*, *The Yale Review*, *The Hopkins Review*, etc. He is the author of *Aspects of Proteus* and *Apples from Shinar*.

TOM POOTS has written for *Coastlines*, *Quixote*, *Inland*, *Mutiny*, *The Canadian Forum*, *Wanderlust*, *The Free Lance*, *Contemporary Fiction*, *The Nation*, *Approach*, *American Weave*, *The Galley Sail Review*, *Venture*, and others. He also works in the graphic arts at his home in New England.

DOROTHY QUICK was born in Brooklyn and lives now on Long Island. She is widely known as a poet and mystery novelist. Her poems have appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Argosy*, *Liberty*, *The Lyric*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *Poetry Chap Book*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Versecraft*, *The Empire Digest*, *Poet Lore*, *Voices*, and many other magazines; her short stories have been published in *Weird Tales*, *The Junior League Magazine*, *The National Home Monthly*, *All Story*, etc. She is the author of several mysteries, and of eight collections of poetry, ranging from *Threads* to *Interludes*. Her current book is a fascinating account of her childhood friendship with Mark Twain—*Enchantment: A Little Girl's Friendship with Mark Twain*, published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

KATHERINE REEVES is a New York poet.

ALASTAIR REID was born in Scotland in 1926. After the war he came to the United States to teach at Sarah Lawrence College, though he now lives in Spain. His poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Hudson Review*, *Encounter*, *Poetry*, *New World Writing* and other periodicals. He is the author of *Ounce, Dice, Trice*, a word book, as well as of several books for children and two collections of poems, *To Lighten My House* and *Oddments, Inklings, Omens, Moments*.

LIBORIA E. ROMANO is the author of two collections, *Tangent Moods*, and *Venus for a Crown*. She is a New Yorker.

RAYMOND ROSELIEP has contributed many poems to many periodicals, among them *America*, *Approach*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Best Articles & Stories*, *The Catholic World*, *Chicago Choice*, *Chicago Review*, *College English*, *The Colorado Quarterly*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *Inscape*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Poetry*, *Spirit*, *The University Bookman*, etc., etc. His first collection, *The Linen Bands*, was published earlier this year by The Newman Press. He was ordained to the priesthood in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1943, and is on the faculty of Loras College in that city.

LARRY RUBIN has been published in *The Southwest Review*, *The San Francisco Review*, *The Saturday Review*, *Modern Age*, *Half Moon*, *The Fiddlehead*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The New Mexico Quarterly*, and others. He is assistant professor of English at Georgia Institute of Technology, though he is a native of New Jersey.

SYDNEY KING RUSSELL has contributed to many periodicals, among them *Macabre*, *Village Gazette*, *Voices*, *The Lyric*, *American Weave*, *Wings*, *Essence*, *Kaleidograph*, *The Country Poet*, *Pegasus*, *Poetry Digest*, etc. Among his dozen books are *Proud Universe*, *Songs for America*, *The Listening Year*, *Clock and Bottle*, and *Thursday Is All Things*. He was an editor of *The Poetry Chap Book* and has several times served as guest editor of *Voices*. He lives in Florida.

ANTONIA Y. SCHWAB is Florida-born, but has lived at Ithaca, New York, for many years. For some time she was assistant editor of *The Lantern*. Her poems have appeared in *The Sewanee Review*, *The Catholic World*, *America*, *Trails*, and other magazines. In private life she is Mrs. W. D. Mills.

WALTER SHEDLOFSKY writes poetry for relaxation. He lives in Missouri.

RUTH FORBES SHERRY is a widely known poet. She is a native of Chicago and was educated at Vassar, Stanford, and the Sorbonne. She has contributed to over 200 periodicals, and is the author of several collections of verse.

JON SILKIN is a British writer, currently teaching in the Department of English Literature at the University of Leeds. He is the author of two collections, *The Two Freedoms* and *The Peaceable Kingdom*.

LOUIS SIMPSON has contributed to *Partisan Review*, *The Paris Review*, *The New Yorker*, *The American Scholar*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Fifties*, *The London Magazine*, *The Western Review*, *New Poems by American Poets*, and many other magazines. He received the Hudson Review Fellowship in poetry in 1957-1958, and subsequently a Prix de Rome. He is the author of three collections—*The Arrivistes*, *Good News of Death*, and *A Dream of Governors*.

JOCELYN MACY SLOAN is a New Yorker. Her work has appeared in *Voices*, *American Weave*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *Four Quarters*, *The Husk*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Lyric*, *Whetstone*, *The Humanist*, *The Literary Review*, *The Fiddlehead*, and other periodicals.

CLARK ASHTON SMITH was outstanding as a fantaisiste who worked in various media; he was a poet, short story writer, painter, sculptor. He contributed to a great number of magazines, ranging from *Poetry* and *The London Mercury* to *The Black Cat* and *Weird Tales*. He was the author of seven collections of poems—*The Star-Treader and Other Poems*, *Ebony and Crystal*, *Sandalwood*, *Odes and Sonnets*, *Nero and Other Poems*, *The Dark Chateau*, *Spells and Philtres*—and of four of short stories—*Out of Space and Time*, *Lost Worlds*, *Genius Loci and Other Tales*, and *The Abominations of Yondo*. Smith died at 68 in the summer of 1961 at his home in California.

VINCENT STARRETT is one of America's most distinguished bookmen. He is also one of the most prolific and versatile of authors, a Baker Street Irregular

CONTRIBUTORS

- of renown, a bibliographer of Arthur Machen and a columnist for *The Chicago Tribune*, a one-time reporter for *Inter-Ocean* and the *Daily News*. He is the author of *221B. Sherlock Holmes*, *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, *Boo Brillog*, *A Baker Street Dozen*, *Autolycus in Limbo*, and many others.
- FELIX STEFANILE is the editor of *Sparrow* and of *Vagrom* publications. He has contributed verse to *The Step Ladder*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *Snowy Egret*, *Kaleidograph*, and many other periodicals. He has one slender collection, and is currently at work on a long narrative, *Diana Moon*.
- JANE STUART is the daughter of Jesse and Naomi Stuart of W-Hollow, Kentucky.
- JESSE STUART is the distinguished author of *Man with a Bull-Tongue*, *Plowshare in Heaven*, *Head o' W-Hollow*, *Beyond Dark Hills*, *Men o' Mountains*, *Taps for Private Tussie*, *Album of Destiny*, *The Thread That Runs So True*, *Clearing in the Sky*, *The Year of My Rebirth*, *God's Obedience* and other books. His work, prose and poetry, has appeared in virtually every quality magazine here and abroad, from *The American Mercury* and *Esquire* to *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Collier's*, from *Country Gentleman* to *Hawk & Whippoorwill*. He returned this summer after a year spent teaching at the American University in Cairo.
- LUCIA TRENT was born in Virginia, and educated at Smith College, Columbia, and the University of Southern California. Her work has appeared very widely here and abroad and has captured no less than fifty prizes. She and her first husband, Ralph Cheyney, served on the staff of several literary periodicals. She is the author of several books.
- LEWIS TURCO has contributed to *Fine Arts Magazine*, *Epos*, *Antioch Review*, *American Weave*, and many other magazines. He is the author of *First Poems*. Currently, he teaches in Cleveland.
- MARK VAN DOREN won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940 for his *Collected Poems*. His poetry has been published in many magazines, and he is the author of such books as *The Mayfield Deer*, *The Seven Sleepers*, *Spring Birth and Other Poems*, *Morning Worship and Other Poems*, *A Winter Diary*, *The Short Stories of Mark Van Doren*, *The Transients*, *Windless Cabins*, *Henry David Thoreau*, *Shakespeare*, *An Anthology of World Poetry*, *Liberal Education*, *The Autobiography of Mark Van Doren*, and many other books. He has been on the faculty of Columbia University since 1920.
- HAROLD VINAL was born in Vinalhaven, Maine, in 1891, and still lives there. His first book of poems, *White April*, was published by the Yale University Press in 1922; his last, *Hurricane*, in 1957. Six other volumes of verse and a book of essays were published between these two dates. Mr. Vinal is the editor of *Voices: A Journal of Poetry*, which has completed forty years of continuous publication this year.
- DONALD WANDREI is the author of two collections of poetry, *Ecstasy* and *Dark Odyssey*, a collection of short stories, *The Eye and the Finger*, and a ma-

FIRE AND SLEET AND CANDLELIGHT

The Web of Easter Island. He has contributed to many magazines, among them *Weird Tales*, *Esquire*, *Astounding Science-Fiction*, *The Quarterly*, *The Arkham Sampler*, etc. He lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was for a few years associated with Arkham House, but terminated this association upon his entry into military service in 1942.

MAN is the son of Manly Wade Wellman; he is now studying at the University of North Carolina.

WIL was born in 1929 and educated at the University of Chicago and elsewhere. Among his five verse collections are *Quarrel with the Rose*, which won the 1958 American Weave Chapbook Award, and *The Kachina Doll*. His poems have appeared in numerous periodicals and anthologies including *Combustion*, *Hearse*, *Modern Age*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Golden Year*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, etc. A member of the Poetry Society of America and the Royal Society of Literature, he is review editor of *Sparrow* and editor-publisher of a little review, *Elizabeth*.

MARGARET WIDDEMER is a longtime resident of New York. In 1919 she shared a PSA-Pulitzer award with Carl Sandburg, and in 1923 won the *Saturday Review of Literature* award for her *Tree with a Bird in It*. She is a popular novelist and the author of several collections of poems, including *Factories*, *Ballads and Lyrics*, *Hill Garden*, and *The Dark Cavalier*. She edited a notable anthology of macabre verse in *The Haunted Hour*.

LORING WILLIAMS is the editor of *American Weave* and an editor of the Book Club for Poetry. His poetry has been published over many years in a variety of magazines. He is the author of *Hour of Breath* and other books.

JAMES WRIGHT believes that poetry "in this age is the art of stating and examining and evaluating truth." His poems have been published in *The Hudson Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The New Orleans Poetry Journal*, *Fresco*, *The Paris Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Assay*, *Botteghe Oscure*, *Poetry*, *The Yale Review*, *Harper's*, and many other periodicals and anthologies. In 1958 he was awarded the Kenyon Review Fellowship in Poetry. He is the author of *The Green Wall*, Volume 33 of the Yale Series of Younger Poets, and of *Saint Judas*.

ELINOR WYLIE (1885-1928) is the author of *Nets to Catch the Wind* (which won the Julia Ellsworth Ford Prize of the Poetry Society of America), *Black Armour*, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, *Collected Poems*, *Last Poems*, *Trivial Breath*, *Collected Prose*, and a memorably charming novel, *The Venetian Glass Nephew*.

FALVEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

DATE DUE

[illegible]

3 9346 00207910 3

NO LONGER PROPERTY OF
FALVEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

